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"Wallace longed for a morning plunge in the cold mountain lake, to which he had been accustomed from childhood."

(From a photograph by the author.)

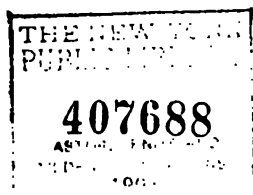
COMRADES COURAGEOUS

A STORY OF TWO
YOUTHS AND THE 'FRISCO EARTHQUAKE

BY
RUSSELL WHITCOMB



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS
1907



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TO THE VIGOROUS
YOUTHS OF AMERICA
WHO STAND
ON THE THRESHOLD OF MANHOOD, RESTLESS
TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES
AND
SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE FOR
THEMSELVES,—AS WELL AS TO ALL
WHO CAN RECALL THE DAYS
OF THEIR YOUTH—THIS
BOOK IS CORDIALLY
DEDICATED.

R. W.

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*Frontispiece from photograph taken from life by
the Author.*

CHAPTER I

A Fight for Life and Friendship.

A GROUP of boys, in animated conversation, stood beneath an electric light in one of the streets of a town near the great city of New York. Through the stillness of the summer night came the tempting call of the waters, as the river plunged over the High Falls at the edge of the town.

"Come on, Dick. What's the use of being a quitter? Nobody's going to tell your mother. We were up at the High-bridge last night and had a dandy time. It's simply great at night."

"I'm not afraid of your telling my mother," replied Richard Clarkson. "She'll trust me to keep out of danger. But I think it's a mighty risky thing, jumping that distance at night. It doesn't tempt me a little bit. I don't see any fun in doing a thing just to brag about it."

"Ho-ho, you're 'fraid," sneered one of several boys. "You better send back those med-

als you won last week for swimming and diving, if you can't do the stunts we all do."

Dick was an expert diver and the taunt cut him deeply.

"Yes, and you better get some of the small boys to give you lessons," chimed in another.

"That last suggestion is a good one," replied Dick, controlling his rising anger. "I'll come up and watch you small boys,—then perhaps I'll know how. I'm not too old to learn a thing or two, but I'll not jump tonight."

"I'd be licked, before I'd be dared," said Jim Barry, who was larger than Dick, and a ringleader in mischief among the small boys.

There was an intended insult in the remark and Dick was quick to resent it from this swaggering bully, for whom he had a great dislike.

"Well," he remarked, "you'll be 'dared' and 'licked' both, if you don't cut out your hot-air. There's your dare, and now for the licking, if you want to come and get it."

Dick had brushed the fellow smartly across the chest with the back of his arm, as he would have pushed aside some cat or dog that was annoying him, and thrown him back into the group of small boys.

"Oh, you're just trying to get up a fight so

as to prevent our going swimming," exclaimed Barry. "That's foxy, all right, but it won't go tonight. I'll meet you tomorrow morning, over in the woods, and give you what you're looking for."

"I guess we'll all be looking 'in the woods' for you," laughed Dick. "No one could drag you into a fight with a fellow of your own size."

"They couldn't, hey? Well you be there and see."

"No; this is the time you fight or run away," said Dick, with determination. "Are you going to take the dare, or fight? I'll settle this now one way or the other, and not tomorrow. You'll need a swim, or a bath, when I get through with you,—or perhaps I will. Come on. I've given the first blow. What are you going to do about it?"

"Ah—come along, Kids," said the bully, "he's trying to break up our fun. He's not in our 'gang,' anyway." And he led the retreat, followed by his chagrined companions, who had received a shock to their pride when the athletic but quiet Dick had humiliated their hero.

One boy, alone, lingered as if undecided what to do. It was Will Brown. Dick put his hand on his shoulder.

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"Will, you're in bad company. Why don't you go with your old friends. You know those fellows are leading you into things you never used to do, and ought to keep out of. You might have won a prize in the swimming events if you had taken a little care of yourself, and not been hanging around the corners until all hours of the night for the last few weeks. You're losing friends fast, just for the sake of a bully and his 'gang,' as he calls them. Don't go with them, Will."

"Come on," shouted the others. "Don't stay with that mamma's boy. He's got to go home to study his Sunday-school lesson."

The taunt had its effect, and Will sheepishly dropped his eyes as he twisted away from the restraining hand of his former friend and ran after his chosen companions.

Dick was too deeply cut by the departure of his old-time friend to give a second thought to the last remark of the boys, or their sneering laughter as they hurried toward the river. He started to walk over to the Boat Club, but felt disinclined to meet his friends who might be gathered there, and turned his steps to the bank of the river, just above the "Falls."

There was something weirdly fascinating in the roar of the mighty, tumbling waters as

they fell a hundred feet into the dark and swirling chasm below. The full moon cast a silvery light over the big basin where the water finally gathered itself into a whirlpool, as if hesitating before it made its great leap over the jagged rocks. The big heart of this boy was full of sorrow. He wanted to be alone, away from everybody, where he could think.

Will, who had for years been his closest chum, had of late drifted away, under the influence of another whom he cordially detested. This last breach seemed to make the hope of any return to the old-time relations as impossible as for the water to climb back over the nearby "Falls."

A gust of wind flung the spray from the seething cataract back in his face and the water trickled down upon his lips. There was a taste of brine as he unconsciously drew his tongue across them. It called to mind the distant sea, in which the fresh water of the river would, ultimately, find a resting place, yet, only for a time before, as a mist, it would return to the mountain sources, whence came this broad river. Might not the old friendship return again in the same way? Perhaps only after a long time and in a new form, but should he not hope and wait? He brushed the mois-

ture from his eyes where it seemed to have collected more than elsewhere and looked toward the high bridge which crossed above the "Falls," where the boys were to test their skill at high jumping,— dangerous enough by day, but doubly so at night.

In the moonlight, he could see them climbing to the top of the high steel trestle. Cautiously they picked their way upward and one by one reached the highest girder, where they stood, clearly outlined against the sky. One misstep and forty feet below they would have been maimed for life on the road-way of the bridge. Balancing themselves with outstretched arms, with careless daring they walked along the narrow footing until they came to a point where they knew the river to be deepest, then one by one they made the long leap of sixty feet into the dark waters below.

He was intently watching the last of the boys as he prepared to make the plunge.

"What's the matter with him?" he said, as he jumped to his feet and started running along the bank. "He's frightened. He's dizzy." Then as he saw the form sway in the moonlight, he shouted, "Don't jump, lie down." But, with an uncertain spring the boy plunged forward, turning completely over and just

clearing the railing of the bridge. There was a heavy splash — not the ‘chug’ of a good jumper or diver entering the water — a splash, that meant much to the accustomed ears of the expert swimmer who was speeding along the bank, tearing his clothing from him as he ran and kicking off his tennis-shoes as he plunged into the water.

The other boys, racing for shore in order to get back first and secure favorite positions for the second jump, were not far away and, in the darkness under the shadow of the bridge, supposed — if they thought at all — that their whole number was joining in the contest to reach the shore first. As they climbed upon the bank, laughing and joking, they were startled by a cry, which came across the water.

“Help! Get a boat!” came the voice, which they recognized as that of Dick, whom they had quite forgotten by this time.

Straining their eyes they could see a single head ploughing through the stream of moonlight toward something that was floating half submerged, and being rapidly borne on toward the “Falls” by the strong current in the middle of the river.

“Get a boat, and be quick about it!” came the cry. “You’ll be too late.”

When they came to a realization of the situation and rushed for a boat, Dick was using his powerful racing stroke as it had never been used in his successful prize-winning races. He had estimated the force of the current and had made direct for a point above the "Falls" where he could reach the floating body before it was carried over to certain death on the rocks below. It was a race between the full power of youth and the awful force of a swollen river.

"I must get hold of him before he reaches those whirlpool eddies, or I'll never have strength to get him out,—and then we'll both go over," he thought.

Stroke by stroke, he shortened the space between them until, with a final effort, he grasped the hair of the unconscious boy, just as his feet were caught in the outer circle of the whirlpool. Exhausted by the hard swimming and excitement, Dick felt his own power relaxing, yet forced himself to an almost superhuman effort to get out of the currents, the force of which he had never before appreciated. Tugging at his burden and doing his utmost, he felt himself being slowly sucked into the horrible clutches of the mad waters.

"Help! Help!" he again shrieked, as he

heard the shouts of the boys and the deep chug of the oars. It seemed miles away amid the thundering roar of the "Falls."

"Row hard!" he shouted. "I can't hold on any longer. We'll both go over."

"We can't come any nearer. Save yourself. You can't save him." It was the voice of Barry,—the boy he thought he was struggling to drag away from the "Falls."

His fingers were becoming cramped and his grip on the thick hair seemed to grow less secure with each long second. Who was it, then, he was trying to save?

The rushing water rolled the body over and the face turned toward him. One look in the darkness gave him renewed courage, and he determined to go over the "Falls" before he would let go his hold.

"Will!" he screamed in a delirium of horror. "Will! wake up!! Swim boy, swim!" and he shook him, in a wild attempt to revive the unconscious lad. The eyes opened. A strange, frightened look came into them, as Will gasped for breath, which had been knocked from his body by the heavy fall.

"Strike out! Kick! For Heaven's sake try. We're going over the "Falls." Swim! swim! Do you hear me, Will! Swim!!"

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Will did hear, and mechanically at first, and then with awakening realization of the necessity for action, he began to swim with Dick's aid, against the current. Little by little, they gained, working toward the side of the eddies, until at last they broke into still water. The boat came quickly upon them and they were hauled in, scarcely knowing what was happening.

When the story of Will's rescue came to be known, the bully was sent away to a military school. The small boys sought the friendship of their better acquaintances, and Will became, once again, the boon companion and "chum" of his ever loyal friend, Dick.

"If it had not been for you, Dick," he said one day as they sat on the river bank looking at the "Falls," "I'd have gone over there; and, if I hadn't gone over that 'Falls,' I was drifting mighty fast into the whirlpool of bad habits, which would have taken me where I could never have come back."

"Let's not talk about that, Will. It's a thing of the past, now, and we all have to live and learn by experience."

"I can never forget it, Dick. I don't want to forget that you proved yourself to be my truest friend, both by advice and then by action."

"Well you needn't," said Dick, "only don't make me think that I'm a hero or you'll spoil me. Come along, it's time we were moving toward home."

As the boys walked leisurely homeward they met Will Brown's elder brother, Fred.

"Have you heard the latest news?" he said, as they drew near.

"What is it?" the boys asked.

"Jim Barry has run away from the military school and sent a note to his mother saying that he was going West to make his fortune. The principal has also written, that Jim left suddenly at night and took twenty dollars of his room-mate's money. Since then no one has heard anything of him."

"Just about what I expected to hear," exclaimed Dick. "He's a bad one. He was always reading those trashy stories of desperadoes and train-robbers, and used to tell the boys that the West was the only place where a fellow could see life and get free from his mother's apron-strings."

"He tried to get me to 'jump-a-freight' and

go out to Montana with him — about a year ago," said Will.

"He told me about some fellows who 'worked-their-way' out there and fell-in with an old prospector, who gave them a half-interest in a mine for helping him drive the tunnels. One night they pushed him into the river and he was drowned, and they sold the mine for over a million dollars and went to California, where they both married rich girls and one became a senator, and the other the president of a big railroad.

"I laughed at him, and asked him, what dime-novel he had in his pocket. He was mad, and said he read about it in the newspaper.

"I told him he ought to change papers, and buy a respectable one — once in a while."

"I wish I had known that, at the time," said Fred. "I'd have given him a worse licking than I did the night he got you to stay out until after midnight. But it's all over now, and Dick's the boy who put him out of the town,— when he showed him up as a coward and a bully."

"I have only one regret," said Dick. "I try to keep out of fights, but I was just waiting for an opportunity to teach him a lesson; and I'm sorry it never came. He was too foxy to give

me a good excuse. But he's gone and 'good riddance to bad rubbish,' as our Irish cook says."

They had now reached Dick's home, and he left them with a promise to come over in the evening to show them some new tricks on the horizontal bar, which they had put up in the Browns' barn.

As Dick ran up the steps, his mother greeted him with her customary smile and asked him, if he had heard about young Barry.

"Yes," said Dick. "I'm awfully sorry for his mother. It must be a terrible blow to her, for she would never believe anything bad about Jim, and always blamed the other boys for everything that got him into trouble."

"She is to be pitied," said Mrs. Clarkson, "but she has made the great mistake of living for herself, and not for her children. She left him to the care of servants from the time he was a baby and they found it easier to let him have his own way than to correct him, for if they did so he would go to his mother, who always took his side and blamed the servants for being unreasonably strict. When he outgrew the care of nurses, his mother could do nothing with him, and his father's business

kept him away so much of the time that the boy had no one to train him properly."

"It makes a lot of difference what kind of a mother a boy has," said Dick. "I'm the luckiest fellow alive, for you can make anyone try to do the right thing,—just to see how happy it makes you. You don't know how it shocks me, when I hear some of the boys' mothers scolding them and calling them 'stupid,' and all kinds of names, and losing their tempers until they don't know what they are saying."

"Boys are embryo men," said Mrs. Clarkson, thoughtfully, "and must be won by woman's love. Woman must win everything in life by her love and tact. She cannot command and enforce obedience to her wishes—not from men—for it stirs up rebellion at once. Boys may be driven for a time, but if they have any manhood in them, they will later break away from a woman's control, except it be the strong bond of affection that is the direct result of a mother's love. Love is woman's greatest power, and by it she has shaped the destinies of the world. Think of this when you are studying history and see if it is not true."

"I know it is true in my case, mother,"

exclaimed Dick, as he put his arms around her and gave her a kiss. "I would rather be thrashed with a raw-hide, than see that look of disappointment and sorrow that comes into your eyes when I do something that makes you unhappy. I feel like a sneaking coward; and you know how quick I try to make you forget how mean I have been. Then when you forgive me, and don't scold me as I deserve, but kiss me and say it's all forgotten; — why, do you know, I give myself the greatest raking-over a fellow can imagine and I don't forget the experience, even if you have promised to do so."

"You have not given me much occasion to worry during the last two years, my son, but when you were younger I often wondered whether I could do my duty by you as a mother, and get you safely started in life,— for a boy who has lost his father in childhood is under a great disadvantage."

"Well, you need not worry longer, mother dear. Just let me know when you think I am going wrong and I'll see that you have no reason to be anxious; for your happiness is more to me than all my personal pleasures."

"Who else have I got in the world to love and make happy? Of course, I have my

friends, but a boy can have a devoted mother only once in his life. Then, I have no brothers or sisters, or living relatives, so you and I have to be everything to one another, don't we?"

"Yes, Dick. But how happy we are, even if alone.

"Richard," said his mother, thoughtfully, after a pause. Dick looked up quickly, for she never called him by his baptismal name, except when she was in some serious mood.

"Yes, mother?"

"It is barely possibly you have some living relatives — somewhere."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Dick in surprise.

"I have never told you," Mrs. Clarkson continued, "because it has been a painful remembrance to me all my life and I preferred not to have it recalled; but I think I ought to tell you now that you have become older.

"I have an older sister, of whom I have heard nothing for many years, but I suppose she is still living. She married a young man whom my father did not think well enough established to take a wife, as he was just struggling to get a start in his profession. But she was headstrong and determined to act on her own

judgment, which she could do as she was of age. They were married, but father refused to go to the wedding and never would see her again after that day.

"He held very old-fashioned views about children's obedience to parents, and was not of a forgiving nature. As my mother had then been dead for several years, there was no one to heal the breach; for I was forbidden to speak of her, or to write to her. After the marriage her husband took her to live in New York and as we lived in New England, of course I could not see her."

"And didn't she write to you?" asked Dick, greatly interested.

"Yes, and I replied, but had to explain why I could not do so again."

"After my father's death I moved to New York and tried to find out where she was living, but they were no longer at the first address and I could learn nothing of their whereabouts.

"Some time after you were born an old neighbor told me of having seen her in New York accompanied by a little child, who called her 'mother.' The old lady had hesitated about speaking to her, fearing she might be mistaken in the recognition, and had lost sight

of her in the crowd before she realized how much it would have meant to us both. That is the last I ever heard of her."

"Why don't you advertise in the paper?" suggested Dick, much excited at the thought of finding an aunt and a cousin.

"I have often thought of it, but dreaded to bring my personal sorrow before the public. You can hardly appreciate how painful such matters are to a sensitive woman. Perhaps we can think of some other way, Dick dear, when you get a little older. Now, that you know about it, some day you may find them, even if I do not live to see them again. In the meantime do not speak of it, unless I do, for it is something I try to forget."

Dick promised to wait until some future time, when they could begin a systematic search to find his aunt's whereabouts, and the matter was apparently forgotten for many months. It was only after the sudden death of Mrs. Clarkson, that Dick realized that he had never learned either the christian name of his aunt, or her name after marriage, and all hope of finding his only relatives had to be abandoned.

CHAPTER II

A Moonlight Skate.

DICK was glad when school opened in the fall, for it was his last year in High School, and as his circumstances did not permit of his considering a college education he had already begun to look forward to the days when he should begin his business career.

The fact that Fred Brown had graduated in the spring, and was now waiting for a position with a company, which had been offered him through an old friend of his father's, made him speculate on his own future prospects with greater interest.

"Wouldn't it be bully if we could get into business together, so that when we had to leave home we could keep up our old friendship," said Dick. "Then later perhaps we could have Will with us."

"When I get with the Company," replied Fred, "I'll keep my eye open for a chance for you, but I may not get the opening that I am

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waiting for for several months yet. It's a hard company to get in with and it's only through the pull I've got that I expect to get a good position,— but it's well worth waiting for."

During the following weeks, Dick and Fred spent much time together out of school hours as Fred was coaching the football team of the School, on which Dick played quarter-back.

At last the football season was over, but the boys had much to talk of as they had carried off the honors and their team held the inter-scholastic championship. This furnished the subject of conversation for the weeks intervening before the Christmas holidays, when a sudden drop of the thermometer brought the boys of the town to the river bank to test the ice for skating.

"It'll bear to-night," said Fred, "for it's freezing up mighty fast and as there is a full moon, let's come up here about half past seven and skate up to the island and back."

"All right," said Dick, "I'm game for the first skate of the season by moonlight or even in the dark. We'll bring Will along, and let him try out his new racing skates."

The boys were hardly able to finish their evening meal before rushing off to try the ice,

and even before the appointed hour the three sturdy lads could have been seen in the soft moonlight speeding over the glassy surface with fast beating hearts that sent the blood tingling to every extremity in defiance of Jack Frost. Fred and Dick were recognized as expert skaters and Will, although younger, was a close third in the race for the island. Others who followed had soon been distanced and the three leaders, spurred on by excitement and ambition to show that they had not lost any of their former skill, were bending forward their hands behind their backs as their powerful strokes swung their bodies gracefully into the high action of the expert racer. Record time was being hard pressed, when suddenly before them appeared a dark streak of open water, where the undercurrent from a tributary brook had prevented the ice from forming.

It was impossible to stop at the tremendous speed at which they were going, and there was scarcely a moment for thought.

Intuitively the boys made ready for a long jump, and as they came to the edge of the ice all three rose as from a spring-board, with arms thrown aloft. It was a moment of sustained suspense, for in the moonlight dis-

tances are deceptive and calculations are often untrustworthy.

Fred's skates were first to touch the ice on the further side. Followed quickly by Dick they were safely beyond danger, but Will had fallen short and struck on the thin ice close by the water's edge. His skates caught and he plunged forward to be quickly grabbed and hauled to safety by his companions.

Except for a bad shake up and some bruises on his hands, and knees, he was not seriously injured and the boys congratulated themselves on a very narrow escape. Immediately thinking of the danger of those following, they sent up a warning cry which echoed down the river and soon reached the ears of the oncoming crowd.

By skating to the other side of the river, the boys found solid ice and returned to those whom they had distanced and all started back, satisfied that they had opened the skating season and had had enough fun for the first night.

At the end of the holidays the boys went back to school and Fred received word of his appointment to a position in one of the western departments of the concern for which he was to work.

It was with mingled feelings of regret and

congratulation that Dick said good-bye to his former chum, but they parted with promises to write often to one another, especially as Dick now feared that they could not begin their business life together, for he could not consider going so far away from his mother, who would then be left entirely alone.

"It's too bad, Fred" he remarked, "but it's Fate and there is no use kicking against what we can't help."

During the winter evenings Dick assisted Will with his lessons, as he was only one year behind him at school, although two years younger. This help was most encouraging to Will, as it was pretty hard for him to hold his own with his class, of which he was the youngest member.

It was just a few weeks after graduating that Dick passed through the most trying event of his life. The sudden death of his mother after a short illness, seemed to bring him to a realization of the fact that he had stepped across the threshold from boyhood to manhood, and that he must now assume the responsibilities of life alone and without the inspiration that had always been present during his mother's life.

After wearisome consultations with the law-

yers who were settling the estate, Dick found there would be nothing left when the debts were paid, so he determined to go to New York, and seek employment.

Early one morning he stood with Will Brown at the station, ready to start out to make his own fortune.

"Will," he said, "I don't know what I am going to do, but I am going to succeed. It seems mighty lonely kind of work looking at it from this standpoint, but others have done it, and I will. 'There's plenty of room at the top of the ladder,' so they say, and I don't propose to stay at the bottom very long. I'll write and let you know how I get on. You keep my trunks and things at your house until I send for them."

"I'll be mighty anxious to hear from you," said Will, "and don't you forget it, I'm going to miss you an awful lot,—but if I only hear that you are getting on all right I won't feel half as badly as I do now, when it does seem mighty tough that you have to start out all alone in the world. If everything hadn't happened so suddenly, Fred might have been able to get you a place out there with him, but he has been transferred and we haven't yet heard of his new address, so there doesn't

seem to be anything else to do. But I'm mighty sorry to have you go."

When the train rolled into the station, they had reached a point where they were beginning to do more thinking than talking, as each wanted to keep under self-control and not give way to the deep feelings of regret with which they were filled.

"Good-bye Will," shouted Dick, as the train pulled out of the station. Will waved his hat in response, as he shouted, "Good-bye Dick, write soon, I'll be waiting for a letter."

When Dick left the train and was crossing the river, he stood on the front of the ferry, as it approached the great city of New York, with a peculiar feeling of mingled doubt and curiosity as to his future.

Although he had often visited the city before, it had been solely for pleasure and to return at night to his own home and friends. Now he realized that he had severed the ties that had been so dear to him from childhood and that he was to take his place as one of the great throng of wage earners in a city where the "survival of the fittest" is the rule of life.

While he was intently studying the saw-toothed sky-line made by the sky-scrapers as they towered until they seemed to touch the

clouds, he was lost in fanciful speculation about the multitudes who labored daily so far above the streets.

He was suddenly awakened from his visions by feeling a hand in his pocket where he had tucked his few dollars with which he was to begin life. Seizing the hand, and whirling about he found himself face to face with a young man of about his own size, who struggled desperately to release himself from the vice-like grip of the young athlete. There was an ugly expression on the face of his captive and Dick realized he held a pickpocket who was desperate in his fear of having been detected in crime.

"Let go of me," snarled the thief. "What do you mean by attacking me. I've done nothing to you. I'll knock you down if you don't let me go."

Dick, amazed at the boldness of his captive, could only reply. "But you had your hand in my pocket."

"You lie," snapped the thief. "Let me go or I'll knock your teeth out."

Dick, resenting being called a liar, and rapidly growing mad at the insolence of the fellow, still kept his grip on his wrist, and exclaimed:—

"You will, will you? You're not the size to do it. If there's any punching going on I'll attend to that."

Before Dick appreciated that the thief must escape at once, if at all, and therefore would stop at nothing to gain his freedom, he received a heavy blow from the left hand against his jaw, which momentarily staggered him, but he quickly came to himself and darted through the ferry in pursuit of the fleet-footed pick-pocket.

At the back of the ferry the thief quickly turned and made a desperate lunge at him with his right hand, which Dick, now fully prepared, parried, landing a heavy blow with his own right hand between the eyes of his assailant.

For a moment blows were rapidly exchanged until Dick, with an upper-cut, caught him on the point of the chin and sent him reeling against the cabin.

At this moment two deck-hands rushed up and seized Dick, who had followed his victim with the intention of holding him until the arrival of the officers.

"Let me go!" cried Dick, "grab that fellow there,—he's a pickpocket."

Instantly a crowd collected and as the thief tried to slip away in the throng, he was seized

by one of the deck-hands and brought face to face with Dick, who was now thoroughly excited and indignant at the deck-hands for holding him.

"He tried to pick my pocket and then, when I grabbed his hand, struck me," explained Dick.

Dick was astounded at the calm assurance of the thief, who declared Dick's statement to be the opposite of the truth and brazenly claimed that instead, Dick had tried to pick his pocket.

The confused deck-hands announced their determination to turn them both over to the police, remarking, that they could tell their stories to the judge.

Dick at once realized that he had no witnesses to support his testimony against this fellow, and appreciated that he was in a very awkward situation. A man from the crowd stepped up to them, with the remark:—

"You boys better stop this where it is, or it will go hard with you both for creating a disturbance on a ferry boat. Neither one of you can prove anything against the other, but the deck-hands can make a complaint for disorderly conduct. Now take my advice and get out."

At this interruption the deck-hands had re-

leased both the boys, and the thief slipped away with the remark, "Me for keeping out of trouble." Dick stood bewildered at his helplessness, chagrined by the injustice done him.

The ferry had now come into the slip and the crowd moved forward to hurry ashore. A well dressed man at Dick's elbow remarked:—"Young man, I believe you were right and I think the man who spoke to you was a confederate of the pickpocket, but it's a good lesson for a young fellow to learn, for you'll be more careful hereafter about where you have your money when you are standing close to a stranger. Remember that in a big city like New York, there are thousands who are escaping the just punishment they deserve, because the police cannot possibly secure evidence to convict them, and every man must do his share in protecting himself and not consider that the police force is maintained for his sole protection. I'll guarantee it will be hard for a pickpocket to get near you again."

Dick looked into the pleasant face of the speaker and appreciated that these first words of free advice were well meant and full of common sense. "Thank you, Sir," he said, "I think I'll remember this lesson."

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“Well, good-day and good-luck to you,” replied the man. “You’re a game fighter and you’ll know how to take care of yourself.”

As the man disappeared in the throng and Dick stood for a moment on the sidewalk wondering which way he would turn in search for work, he realized that the fellow who makes his way in the world is the one who takes each lesson as it comes and confidently steps forward ready to meet the next. That the past must be forgotten, that the eyes may be clear to see the opportunities ahead.

CHAPTER III

The Stowaway.

SOME boys are born with a spirit of adventure and a love of sight-seeing. They seem unable to comprehend the dangers and difficulties that pave the road to success and long to get away from home and friends to try to solve the problems of life alone and in their own way. Richard Clarkson was a boy of this kind, but love for his widowed mother had kept him at her side and he had resisted all the alluring prospects of his wildest dreams.

It was only after her death, that he determined to see more of the world and seek his fortune in some new place.

This was necessary, for he had discovered that there was nothing left after the estate had been settled by the lawyers. A few days of looking for work in New York convinced him that a boy could more easily starve in that great city than elsewhere, unless he was willing to become the object of charity.

Indefinite promises of some position in the future was all that he could get for encouragement from those to whom he had been known during his school days, while others turned down his application with hardly a courteous answer.

Greatly discouraged, he walked down to the docks and along the water front, to think what he best could do, for his supply of money was reduced to a little small-change, and would not last another day.

At one of the wharves he noticed a sailing vessel which was evidently about to put to sea.

"Why shouldn't I slip aboard her, and go along," he said, half aloud. "I can't be any worse off than I am here. It would be easy enough to get aboard unseen. She looks like a 'coaster' bound for one of the ports 'down East.'"

She was an old type of boat and by no means a beauty, yet she looked seaworthy and there was an air of mystery about her that appealed to his imaginative mind.

Going nearer, he watched the men who were swinging the last of the cargo aboard, then, suddenly crossed the street, where he entered a restaurant.

A little later, had not the officers' eyes been turned away, they would have seen a youth quickly drop into the hold and disappear, but all were busily engaged in making the final arrangements for sailing.

Dick had a bottle of water and a package of sandwiches which he thought would keep him alive until the boat was well out of the harbor, and, once at sea, he intended to go on deck and ask to be given a chance to work his passage.

He had heard the Captain remark, that he had failed to get as many men as he wanted and would have to go short-handed. If Dick had known more of sea life, he would have made application to "ship" in the regular way, but he was filled with the foolish notion of becoming a stowaway.

Once safely below, he easily found a snug hiding place and made himself comfortable. For a while he listened to the sounds which came from above, as they lowered the cargo into the hold. At length the monotony of lying in the dark made him sleepy, and he knew nothing more until he was awakened by being thrown about by the rise and fall of the vessel, as she plunged into the heavy seas that made her quiver and creak. All was dark and there

was a silence everywhere that gave him an uncanny feeling. He was thirsty and groped about to find the bottle of water which he had placed in a space between two cases.

His hand struck something which darted away with a scurrying sound that echoed about the ship and gave him a shudder.

"Rats!" he exclaimed. "I never thought of them. They're after my sandwiches."

He recalled many horrible stories of the ferocity of ship-rats and turned cold with dread of an encounter with them. At that minute he heard them tearing the paper in which his food was wrapped and decided not to stay any longer in his hiding place. Carefully crawling over some boxes he made his way toward the hatchway through which he had entered the hold. He felt certain they were well out at sea because of the heavy motion of the ship, and determined to get out of his self-imposed imprisonment without further delay. He had the courage of ignorance and pictured pleasantly to himself the surprise of the officers, when he should make known his presence aboard ship.

He expected the Captain would be pretty ugly at first, but when he had heard his hard-luck story, and had learned of his willingness

to work as one of his crew, Dick assumed he would be accepted as another useful hand and therefore receive the old sea-dog's blessing. Then all would be well. It had always been that way in the story-books, and the hero always came out on top.

These were pretty dreams and very pleasing, as he groped his way to find the hatch.

His first awakening was when he found himself a prisoner against his will. The hatch had been fastened down and there was no way to get out. The thought of the rats and certain starvation made his shudder. The cold perspiration broke out like rain drops on his forehead and he would have faced any band of pirates to get through that hatch and on deck in the free air.

Dick had climbed to the top of a pile of boxes directly under the hatch and was vainly trying to raise it, while he pounded with his fists and yelled to be let out. The commotion he made startled the rats and he could hear them scurrying like a lot of cats about the ship. It seemed to him there must have been thousands. Suddenly a swarm of them rushed between and over his feet.

Shrieking and kicking like a maniac, he jumped up and down, while he continued to

yell for help. As he danced about his foot kicked a loose piece of timber about four feet long and he pounced upon it for a weapon of defence against another rush of rats. It then occurred to him to use it as a battering-ram to pound upon the hatch, hoping to be heard on deck.

How long he continued this racket he never could estimate, but it seemed hours. At last, however, he heard a grinding noise above his head; there was a sudden downward draft of fresh air, and the star-lit sky appeared above him. To his eyes, it seemed like daylight, after the inky darkness of that awful rat-hole.

With one bound he was on deck,—and then came his second awakening. He was instantly grabbed by powerful hands and shaken as a dog would have shaken a rat from the ship's hold. His defensive resistance was at once subdued by a blow on his jaw, that sent him rolling in the scuppers, and made him think of present, rather than past troubles.

Dick was quickly made aware of a well established fact,—that on the high-seas a stowaway is not what he is pictured in story-books. He was given plenty of time for reflection and little for explanations. Almost before he knew it, he found himself in new quarters,

in some dark hole where he was as securely locked in as he had been before,— and the rats were still his neighbors.

There was this consolation, however, that the officers knew he was aboard and they could, hardly, let him be eaten by rats, or starve to death. In the morning he undoubtedly would be brought before the Captain and, if not thrown overboard, probably be put to work with the crew. The First Mate had been on duty when he had made his sudden appearance and would naturally report to the Captain in the morning.

Dick was suffering greatly with thirst brought on by long shrieking for help, and the excitement had brought on a fever that parched his throat. He was so thoroughly exhausted that he failed to appreciate that he had been many hours without eating. His one thought was of water. "Oh! for one drink of water." He could hear the sea-water as it rushed along the side of the ship, and gladly would have gulped down even that briny stuff with satisfaction. He entirely forgot the rats, so great was his anguish from thirst. The pain in his head was excruciating and he put his hands up to hold it together, for it seemed to be splitting,— opening and shutting in re-

sponse to a throbbing brain. There was a great lump above his left temple where he had come up against the bulwarks as he fell, and his jaw was painfully sore.

He saw flickering lights floating in the darkness near his face and heard strange noises ringing in his ears. He remembered nothing more until after a long time when he became half conscious of being carried on deck, and suddenly hurled into the sea. The cold water striking his face seemed to clear his brain.

With a scream of terror, he awoke to find himself lying on the deck at the feet of the Captain, who was looking him over with no friendly eye. A bucket of water had brought him to consciousness in quick order.

"Huh," growled the Captain, as Dick opened his eyes. "Thought you'd like to play stow-away, did ye? Didn't find it quite so jolly as you thought — Hey?

"Guess you'll find it rather worse on deck than it was down below. Down there, there's rats, but up here there's 'cats.'"

The Captain and crew enjoyed a hearty laugh at this joke, which did not appeal to Dick as at all humorous when he recalled the stories he had read of sea life and the horrors of the "Cat."

He had not moved during this one-sided conversation. He felt safer doing nothing. He had no ideas to act on, and he still hoped he might be dreaming.

"Get up," bellowed the Captain, as he shoved him with his foot, much as one might a lazy dog, but not so gently.

Dick tried to get on his feet, but he could scarcely move, and one of the sailors gave him a rough lift, that stood him upright before the Captain.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said, "but it was starve on land, or go to sea. I thought you might make a sailor of me, if I came aboard."

"Why didn't you ask me to ship you before we sailed? I remember seeing you hanging 'round the dock."

"I didn't have sense enough," Dick replied, frankly.

"Well, I like that better than a lie," said the Captain, looking the boy over and sizing up his strength. "You're a pretty husky youngster, and may be we can get enough work out of you to pay for your grub."

"Bo'sn," he continued, "take him and find out what he's good for,—and don't let him off easy. Make a sailor of him, 'long as that's what he's looking for. Better feed him up

first — he's lookin' kinder white around the gills."

Nothing ever tasted better than the water and the coarse food which the Boatswain gave Dick.

"You soak up water like a sponge," he exclaimed. "You must think we have a well aboard ship. You'll have to come to anchor on that course, or we'll have our tanks dry 'fore we sight land."

"Just one more," begged Dick, "I'm nearly famished."

"Well, I reckon you'll have to get it this time, but you'll have to learn water's a mighty precious article on the high seas. There — go slow, now. 'Twill last longer."

During the long weeks that followed, which ran into months, Dick learned that a boy's life at sea is nothing to wish for. Fortunately, he had spent his summers since childhood at the seashore, and had been constantly on the fishing boats that made daily trips from the little fishing town on the coast near where he lived. He had never known what sea-sick-

ness felt like, and that was of great advantage to him now.

His knowledge of boats and sailing enabled him to quickly qualify as a seaman, which pleased the Boatswain, who took credit for quickly making a good sailor out of a land-lubber.

For all that, Dick was the one upon whom all the hard work was piled and he was never allowed to make a "kick" or complain. Once he did make some objection to doing another man's work without orders from a superior, but a string of oaths and a marlin-spike thrown very close to his head, convinced him that everyone on that boat assumed that he was his superior, and Dick made up his mind to take no more chances of being maimed for life, but to take his medicine like a man; — until his day for escape should come. This he resolved should be when first they put into any port where land was not more than two miles away. He knew he could swim that distance with ease, as he had often done it. So he lived on, day by day, hoping the ship would soon put into some harbor.

During all these long weeks he had failed to get any information about the destination of the vessel, for his inquiries had always been

answered by the same remark — interspersed with curses — “None of your business. You’ll get a long enough voyage to satisfy you.”

One night, as he lay in his bunk, thinking of what a fool he had been, and with his eyes closed in pretense of sleep,—so that he might escape being annoyed by the personal taunts of the sailors, who found their chief amusement in making him a butt for their coarse jests on all occasions,—he heard them discussing two matters that greatly interested him.

He learned that they were sailing for a port in the Philippine Isles, and that the boat was loaded with powder and dynamite. He then understood why the Captain had found so much difficulty in shipping a full crew and had accepted about the hardest lot of seamen one could imagine being gotten together.

Dick did not enjoy the news he had heard. It meant that the voyage would be many weeks longer and that he was sailing the seas on top of a mighty bomb, which at any moment might send them all into eternity.

This information kept him thinking during the rest of his days on the dynamite ship and prepared him for events that came later.

One morning, when he came on deck, he

saw what looked like a low cloud on the horizon. He was about to comment on it when he overheard two of the officers talking.

The first speaker was saying; "It's one of them islands that Uncle Sammy never's been able to bring 'round to submission. Them natives is as wild as cannibals."

"We'll have to keep a sharp look out for reefs off that southerly point," said the other. "It's all guess work with us, here."

"Oh, the Captain knows his course, all right," replied the other.

"Well, may be he does, and may be he don't," sneered the other. "There's mighty few men afloat knows this coast."

Dick moved quietly forward. He wanted to get to the one place where he could, occasionally, find a few moments of peace and freedom from association with the sailors, whom he had come to despise beyond all living creatures. They had proved themselves cruel, hardened brutes. Two were confessed ex-convicts and the rest were scarcely better. He had never supposed such men existed and was always thinking of the day when he could part company with them, forever.

The sight of land had given him a mo-

mentary hope, but the conversation he had overheard had disheartened him.

Carefully he made his way to the very end of the bowsprit, where, with one hand firmly gripping the rigging, he lay back against the bellying jib. Before him was only the calm sea and as he looked across it at the shadowy line of land, he felt that he would like to take one step forward into the peaceful water beneath rather than ever to return to the horrors of the ship behind him.

He had been standing there some time, lost in deep meditation, when suddenly he saw a color and motion in the water that caused him to think of the ship and its cargo.

"Rocks ahead," he shouted, and his voice rang through the quiet air to the Captain, who was talking to the First Mate.

"Where away," came back the Captain's shout.

"Dead ahead, under the bow," called back the stowaway.

The Captain jumped to the wheel and threw it "hard aport."

The boat responded to the helm and began to come up into the wind, but at the same moment a gentle shiver passed through her frame—then another, and then a terrifying

shock as she struck with full force on a hidden reef.

At the same moment Dick was hurled head-long into the water, beyond the reef on which the bow of the boat had struck. Being an expert swimmer he had realized that he was going overboard in time to straighten himself, so that he slipped below the surface as neatly as if he had been giving an exhibition of high diving.

As he raised his head and bent his back to bring him to the surface, he was caught by a tremendous undercurrent and spun around in a whirlpool of irresistible force.

Struggling to get to the surface, he finally succeeded in getting his head above water, where the previously placid sea was now in wild confusion. He could see nothing of the ship, but on every side the water was covered with floating wreckage.

It came to him instantly, that the dynamite had been set off by the concussion when the boat struck on the rocks and that the ship had been riddled to splinters.

Throwing his arms over a floating spar that drifted near him, he looked everywhere for some sign of life. Not a living thing was afloat — but himself.

He realized that nothing but the fact that he was beyond the reef and deep under the water at the time of the explosion had saved his life. Dick felt a great throb of gratitude for his marvelous escape from such a horrible death, even though he had no knowledge of what his fate was now to be.

In the presence of the great catastrophe that had just taken place, no new dangers seemed to impress him. He was free from the horrors of his imprisonment on the ship, which had met her doom and carried her brutal crew with her, while he lived, unharmed.

CHAPTER IV

Patsy Appears.

FORTUNATE circumstances had done much to make possible Richard Clarkson's escape from death. The force with which he had plunged from the bowsprit had carried him far below the surface, so that when the dynamite went off he was beyond its power.

The dynamite being stowed away just under the deck, the force of the explosion had been upward where there was least resistance. The deck had gone skyward, shattered into thousands of splinters, while the hull had been split open from stem to stern, as with a mighty cleaver. Mast and rigging had followed the upward course of the fragments of the deck and fallen back into the ocean, a tangle of ropes, canvas and spars.

With unusual good luck, Dick had escaped being struck by the falling mass, in the midst of which he now found himself grasping a

floating spar. As he raised himself above the surface to look about him, he saw floating near by a large piece of the shattered boat and at once struck out for it. It proved to be the top of the main cabin, and made a large raft capable of supporting much more than his weight. Another important condition that had befriended him was the quiet calm that rested on the sea, otherwise he would have been ground to death amid the floating wreckage.

Once safely on the improvised raft, he began to think seriously of his predicament. He remembered what he had overheard about the unfriendly natives on the shore, which appeared just above the horizon, and he had little desire to drift there, if it should happen that the wind and tide should so direct his fate. He realized that any port which he might like to make, even if he could govern his course, was too far away to allow of any hope of reaching it alive.

There seemed but two possibilities, one, to be carried ashore; and the other, to drift further out into the open sea, where he would surely die of starvation unless by merest chance he should be picked up by some passing ship. After thinking the matter over, he decided that unfriendly natives could be no more

cruel than death from hunger and thirst, and determined to strive to reach the shore.

How to accomplish this in the quickest way now occupied his every thought and he cast his eyes over the floating mass of rigging and spars. His first glance revealed pieces of canvas from the sails, drifting here and there among the broken spars and ropes, and he almost forgot his danger in his enthusiasm to get to work rigging a sail from these for his unsteady boat.

Lying flat, so as not to over-balance his cranky craft, he reached into the water and drew out a single board which could be used as a means of propelling himself near the floating sails and rigging.

As he was about to slide back from his position near the edge, he saw something floating, half submerged amid the boards and planks. It was so unexpected a sight that he was startled and drew back, but on second thought, reached into the sea and quickly slipped back into the center of his raft, dragging with him the limp form of the only friend he had had aboard ship,—Patsy—a little fox-terrier. The dog lay motionless like a drowned rat. But not so Dick, he was all action. Putting his ear close to the limp form of the little

creature he listened for the beating of the heart. Patsy might have been human and yet received no more anxious examination at the hands of his rescuer.

"His heart still beats," Dick exclaimed. "Patsy, you're all right. I'll bring you back to life again. I can't lose my only friend, now."

Dick was working like a life-saver. He had once seen them at the seashore, as they worked over a man they had rescued, and he was trying the same system of resuscitation on poor little Patsy. He was soon rewarded by seeing a quiver through the limbs, and then the eyes opened and looked up into his. Such a look, full of surprise and amazement. It spoke louder than words and as plainly asked, "Where am I? What in all dogdom has happened?"

Dick clasped his little shipmate close in his arms and hugged him very hard.

Patsy yelped with joy, and seemed to understand that he had been saved from some awful fate, which he could not comprehend. His hysterical barking and struggles signified his wild delight, and when Dick finally let him go, he nearly fell overboard in his enthusiasm as he jumped about on the raft. Dick grabbed

him just in time to save his getting a ducking and warned him vigorously.

"Here, you crazy headed youngster. Do you think you have a three-master under you? Keep your head or you'll capsize us," and he again cuddled up the only living thing in their circumscribed world.

"However did you escape the fate of the rest?" he questioned as he looked into the bright, snapping eyes, so close to his own.

"I know," he continued thoughtfully, "I remember. You had followed me out on the bowsprit and you must have gone overboard when I did. Yes. I see it all, now; only you didn't dive, so you came up sooner,—probably just in time to get stunned by the concussion of the explosion.

"Well, it doesn't make much difference how it happened. Here we are, safe and sound for the present, and we'll face the future together and fight it out side-by-side.

"Now, I've got to get to work and do something;—so you keep quiet. Lie down!"

Patsy understood the command, if no more of the conversation, in his own way, and seemed to realize the situation and acted with great credit to himself, signifying his approval by an occasional bark and constantly wagging

his stump of a tail, while Dick labored with his makeshift oar and worked the raft to a position where he could drag some canvas and rigging aboard.

When he had untangled considerable stuff and pulled it onto the raft, he noticed an object floating on the wreckage which at once caught his eye. He sculled his craft toward it and quickly lifted it aboard.

"I thought so," he exclaimed, "a crate of oranges. They will be food and drink."

Then with a thoughtful expression on his face, "But not for you, Patsy. What are you going to eat?"

Patsy looked up with eyes full of curiosity. He knew he had been asked a question, but he did not quite take in the meaning.

"Wait a bit," exclaimed Dick. "One find suggests the chance of another," and he began to scrutinize the floating mass about him.

After carefully searching, he picked up a water-tight tin bread box, half full of bread, and a barrel of hard tack.

"That will keep us both well fed," he remarked as he surveyed his cargo, "and it's about all we can carry on this raft,—but, Patsy," he added, with evident disappointment, "what will you do for something to drink? I

can eat oranges when I'm thirsty, but what are you to do? Well, water won't float, that's sure, and we won't find any if we stay here looking all day, so I guess you'll have to learn to drink orange juice." Patsy wagged his stump of a tail as if agreeing to the suggestion.

"Now, I must get busy rigging a sail," said Dick. He began to work with a will and soon had a broken spar set in a hole in one corner of the cabin roof, where the stove funnel had formerly come through, and soon had it well stayed in position with rope he had cut from the drifting rigging.

A sailor always wears his knife, no matter how few clothes he may wear, and this experience had proven to Dick the wisdom of that custom. That friend-in-every-need had been doing good service while stepping the mast and putting up the stays.

Now he rigged one of the small jibs as a leg-o-mutton sail and whittled down a handle on the board he had picked up, so he could use it as a sweep to steer his craft. He realized he could do little else than sail before-the-wind with such a strange boat, but he could at least make more progress than by drifting with the wind and tide.

Using some of the extra canvas to protect his

cargo, and spreading the rest where it could dry in the hot sun, he hauled in on his "sheet" and the ocean-born craft began to draw out of the floating wreckage.

All this time Dick had kept his eyes open for evidences of any of the crew who might have survived the catastrophe, but feeling assured that they had all perished, he knew he could do nothing by remaining longer on the scene, and he dreaded the possibility of being detained there until the dead should rise to the surface and surround him in their ghastliness, when he could not give them so much as a decent burial.

He was very silent and preoccupied with many conflicting thoughts as he and Patsy quietly sailed away, carried before a welcome breeze that had now sprung up as if an omen of good luck in the midst of trouble.

"May their souls rest in peace," Dick said reverently, as he looked back on the scene of desolation they were leaving. Patsy, seeing the direction of his gaze looked in the same direction as if seeking some explanation of all that had transpired, then turned his eyes wistfully toward his new master as if to ask what had become of those he had formerly known.

"They're all gone, Patsy. You'll never see

them again. They were kinder to you than they were to me. Yet, I'm sorry for them, just the same. They were a rough lot, but they must have had some good in them for they all loved *you*. I'm sorry it all had to happen." And he put his arm around the little dog who had come close to him when he began to speak.

Hour after hour passed and the little craft sailed on, bearing the two companions on their unknown course.

The sun dropped into the sea, but the friendly moon came up to cheer them, while the wind and tide carried them along the shore of the island, but never toward 'it. With all his efforts to guide the raft to the land, Dick failed to work her in near the coast. All night they sailed and when the morning broke they were out of sight of all land, in the broad and boundless sea.

They had eaten several times during the day, Dick satisfying himself with the hard-tack and an orange, while he had saved the bread for Patsy, as he found he would eat that but not

the hard-tack. The poor little dog was thirsty, for he had not learned to like the orange juice Dick had tried to teach him to drink; but he was not, yet, at the limit when any liquid will be fought for to allay the awful agony of a long endured thirst.

The sky had been covered by heavy clouds, which offered a relief from the glare of the sun but also caused the wind to sweep down in squalls that gave Dick some uneasiness about the stability of his boat and her rigging. All went well, however, until late in the afternoon, when the heavens darkened in a manner that was very terrifying to one of Dick's experience.

"We'll have to take in that sail, Patsy," he exclaimed, as he saw the wind coming across the sea. "We're in for a 'trying out,' now, and I can't make any guesses as to how we're going to come out of it. This is not a very weatherly craft to ride through a squall, but we'll make the best of it. If we're 'born to be hung' we can't die now, that's sure, and I guess we haven't been saved from the sea, once, to be drowned now. I don't think I'll ever believe that I am in danger of dying at sea. I'm slated to die on land, that's certain. Anyway, you cheer up and don't look so frightened, for I think it's having you along that's

kept up my courage, and if you turn a white-feather now, I'll not be good for anything."

All the time Dick was talking he was busy taking down the sail, while Patsy was watching him closely, cocking his head first on one side and then on the other, anxious to catch the meaning of his words and actions for he was quick to see that something unusual was happening.

Dick tried to get everything snug and fast, ready to resist the approaching squall. He took Patsy under his arm, and stretched himself on the raft to keep everything as low as possible, to give no unnecessary purchase for the wind.

He rolled up in a piece of canvas for protection, in case the wind lashed the water into waves of sufficient height to go over their craft, which floated very close to the surface.

"Here she comes," muttered Dick. "Keep close, now, and hold on tight, or we may get washed overboard. Then it would be all up with us."

He had pulled the canvas over their heads as he spoke and was hanging on to the foot of the mast for his life, while the frail cockleshell of a boat spun around in the whirling wind and careened until he thought it would

turn turtle, and send them down to "Davy Jones' locker."

It seemed as if it would never cease. Wave after wave broke over them. Several times they were washed so near the edge as to make Dick think they were going overboard. Once his legs went into the sea, but he pulled himself back by the firm grip he had on the mast, — still holding Patsy with the other arm. Then there came a lull in the wind and the raft seemed able to keep herself up out of the waves.

There was a heavy patter on the canvas above them and a heavy rain poured down, flooding the deck, as the waves had before.

Patsy anxiously investigating each changing condition, sniffing with his nose, began to squirm to get free from Dick's grip and succeeded so far as to get his head stretched to the deck. He was wildly licking up the fresh rain water to quench his thirst, when Dick awoke to the cause of his struggles.

"You wine puppy," he exclaimed. In my anxiety to keep afloat I never thought of this chance to get water. Wait a bit — the wind's gone and we're fairly steady now. I'll soon catch some of this rain."

Jumping out from under their shelter, he

found the tin bread-box and putting the bread under the canvas that covered his stores, which had been well secured, he quickly rigged up a piece of the sail-cloth so as to catch the heavy rain and let it run into the tin box. He knew that when it rains, a great deal of water runs off a small space in a few minutes, and before the rain ceased Dick had his bread-tin full to the brim. In the meantime Patsy had found a place where the rain collected against a coil of rope and he had fully satisfied himself.

After the storm, came a beautiful change,—a quiet sea, and not enough wind to move their raft, but it was so peaceful and calm that it seemed to Dick a proof that some great power was guiding them through danger into safety.

Dick realized the futility of hoisting the sail until a breeze came up—for it could only flap about with the quiet rolling of the raft—so he stretched himself out for a much needed rest, and quickly fell asleep, exhausted beyond his own appreciation.

Patsy watched through those long hours,—for the sun dropped into the sea and came up again, before Dick awoke. When at last he opened his eyes, Patsy was calling to him in no uncertain growls and barks.

Startled by the dog's actions, he jumped to his feet and looked in the direction indicated by Patsy's nose. There he beheld something which made him wink several times before he was certain that he was awake. Then he added the full power of his voice to the barking of his little friend.

Bearing down on them was a big, white cruiser, with the "Stars and Stripes" flying gaily in the breeze.

"We're saved! Patsy, we're saved!!" he shouted, as he waved a piece of canvas above his head, but he found a big lump in his throat that made it hard to talk, so he just waved and waved.

He had learned to love and honor his country's flag while still a schoolboy, but now fully comprehended what that flag means to a free-born American, when it floats over the far distant sea where Uncle Sam is guarding his newly adopted children of the Philippines.

It was not long before Dick and Patsy were safely aboard the mighty war-ship and they sailed away saying "farewell" to the little craft that had done them such good service.

Dick soon learned that the cruiser was headed for the United States. As the days passed, there was so much to occupy and in-

terest him aboard the big man-of-war that he hardly realized that so long a voyage had been made when he was shown the distant line of shore, which meant that they would soon pass through the Golden Gate, into the harbor of San Francisco.

CHAPTER V

A Youth in the Wildlands.

THE Indian is noted for being cunning, but for many years the father of Wallace Williams had kept their home among the mountains a well hidden secret. Not even a white-man knew where it was, so well had the former college professor secluded himself and child, soon after the death of his wife.

When he had fully established and stocked his little ranch and arranged his library and scientific apparatus for his investigations, the devoted naturalist had settled down to a life of study and the complete education of his son. He hoped the boy might become capable of assisting him in the preparation of a work on natural history, which should become their living monument, long after they had finished their labors.

As Wallace grew into full boyhood he was able to render much aid to his father by his skilful use of the camera, and he secured many

photographic records of the habits of wild animals about which there had been previously little accurate knowledge. It was a great question with Wallace whether he found more pleasure in hunting in behalf of science with the camera, or for the sake of food with his rifle and heavy cow-boy pistol, with all of which he was an expert.

By his eighteenth year, Wallace had developed, under the beneficial influences of this outdoor life, into rugged health and extraordinary stature, attaining a height of six feet, and was as perfectly formed as an Apollo.

It was at this time that he was sent on the first mission that brought him into touch with the great world, of which he had so often talked with his father.

As he was returning to the ranch and began to ascend the Divide, Wallace and his horse were white with the dust of the plains. The horseman, young and powerfully built,—rode his mount as one long accustomed to the saddle, while the horse was worthy of its rider.

“Take it steady,” said the youth, “We’re nearly home. Once over the Divide and it’s easy going.” He leaned forward, and affectionately patted his horse on the neck. “It’s been a hard push I’ve given you today, but

you know tomorrow will be my birthday and I want to get home early tonight.

"We'll make it by sunset and then you can have a good rest, for, tomorrow, we'll celebrate the event by doing nothing. I'll be eighteen, Dandy, eighteen. Do you understand?"

Dandy gave a whinney, as if to signify his comprehension. "Perhaps you do, but what difference does age make in this wild country with only one neighbor within a hundred miles, and he the old fellow we just left that letter with. He'll have to send it along by the stage when it goes out this week. I wonder why father did not show it to me? It was addressed to a man in California,—Franklyn Baxter, Lawyer, The Call Building, San Francisco. I'll never forget that name and address for it's the first letter I ever mailed — and then there's something about me in it, for he enclosed some photographs of me, taken last week. What do you think it means, Dandy? Why, do you suppose, in the twelve years we have been here, he's never sent me down to see that old man before, but has always gone himself when we needed ammunition, or anything?"

Dandy shook his long mane as he pricked up his ears to catch his master's voice.

"Ho, ho! I guess you don't know any more

about it than I do — We've been chums for years,—grown up together, and you know about as little of the rest of the world as I do.

"But, don't you mind that, old boy. Father's promised to take me out of 'The Hills' next winter, and you'll go along, so we'll see the world together.

"I guess we'll be kept pretty busy learning new trails, but if we've been able to get about in the Wildlands, where no white-man ever dares go, I don't think we'll get lost in New York, or any place.

"I ought to feel at home in New York, for I was born there. I can faintly recall long rows of buildings, lights at night,—not fires or stars,—but some kind of artificial lights."

Dandy now dropped into a walk and showed fatigue from the long journey.

"Well, I can't tell you much more," mused Wallace. "Of course there were people there, but I can't recall them. It seems strange that I've never seen anyone,—except father and the old man over there,—since I was a little fellow, too young to remember much of anything.

"Come on, now, it's easy going here. I believe you're falling asleep listening to me. Wake up! Let's get over this last climb and

on the down grade." Dandy started off at a better gait, and the young man encouraged him by a sympathetic harmony of movement.

When they had reached the highest point, the horse sniffed and threw his ears forward. At the first glance into the valley beyond, Wallace pulled up his horse and swung him back under cover of the brow of the hill. Quickly dismounting and throwing the reins over the horse's head, he cautiously crawled forward, peering through the sage brush. At the further side of the basin between the hills a band of Indians were riding away, urging on their heavily laden pack horses.

Wallace had never seen Indians at close range before, for his father had found an isolated location for their home, above and out of sight of any natural trail.

It was to this hidden ranch among the mountains that Wallace was returning, when he saw the Indians in the valley and hid himself to avoid being seen, while he watched them wind their way into the distant canyon and disappear among the hills.

When there was no longer any danger of being observed he sprang into his saddle and rode rapidly along the trail, scanning its surface for tracks left by the Indians. Failing

to find any evidence of their having passed that way, he was puzzled to know how they happened to be in the valley below, and from which direction they had come. From childhood, he had been well trained to keep out of sight of Indians, and it gave him an uncomfortable feeling when, at long intervals, he caught far distant glimpses of one of their roving bands, as they chanced to pass through the Wildlands.

Some instinct, highly developed in this Son-of-Nature, made him hurry on to report the news to his father, and he pressed his horse forward at more speed than before he had been so suddenly halted by the unwelcome sight.

As he descended the other side of the Divide, he soon came to a point where the trail ran along and crossed a swift but shallow stream. Here he left the trail for the river. Riding in the water close to the bank, he ascended into a wild and apparently impenetrable pass, between the crumbling reddish rock of the mountain side. Few riders would have been bold enough to so much as follow this intrepid horseman in what seemed an impossible undertaking:—no one, not reared in the very lap of the wilderness, would have dared venture this wild ride alone and unguided.

To Wallace this was a familiar journey. It was the secret entrance into their secluded domain, and its uninviting character had been as a locked gate to keep out unwelcome visitors.

Up,— up he climbed, his sure-footed horse knowing every foot of the ground and dashing forward with no need of urging, for he knew he was fast shortening the distance that kept him from his evening meal and a rest after a long journey.

At a point about five hundred feet above the place where they left the trail, the horse turned from the water and bounded up a steep embankment to a level stretch of hard rock, where there was no danger of any tracks remaining for scanning eyes. They had gone but a few rods when the attention of both horse and rider became fixed on a sight that was appalling in its significance — a broad column of smoke rose from the hidden depression beyond, where lay the little valley in which the cabin stood. They had come to a sudden halt, as is the custom of the plains on discovering some unexplained condition ahead.

“What’s it mean, Dandy?” exclaimed Wallace to his long-time companion, as the horse extended his nose and ears forward and sniffed

the air, while his eyes were dilated with the excitement of fear.

"Father would never build such a fire to disclose our location to the Indians:—

"Indians! Indians!!—That's it!—They've been here—and we've come too late." No spurs were needed, for Dandy knew what words meant even though he could not use them.

It was a wild ride that brought horse and rider within view of the little valley, where nothing remained but the smouldering ruins of the cabin, and the charred and blackened fields where their crops had grown. Here and there lay the useless parts of the cattle which had been killed and carried away. It was a scene of devastation and annihilation.

Wallace sat on his horse like a piece of marble, speechless with horror, as he recognized the meaning of what he beheld. With a shudder that shook his iron frame and nearly unfooted the horse,—gripped between his powerful legs as in a mighty vice,—he regained control of his faculties and dashed forward to the site of the cabin, where he flung himself to the ground and began searching the ruins for some evidence of his father's fate.

Near the hearth he found the charred bones

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of the only person he had ever known as a friend and companion, with whom he had grown to young manhood; and from whom he had learned all he knew of love and happiness. As he staggered back, overcome by the realization, he fell unconscious before the stone step that had once been the threshold of his home, — alone, unknown, unknowing — in a great strange world, which to him was an unexplored and mysterious unreality.

How long he remained unconscious he never knew, but when he again came to a knowledge of what was happening, Dandy had hold of his coat with his teeth, and was shaking him again and again. As he opened his eyes the horse began licking his face and whinneying, as only a horse can when he loves his master as they do in the great western country, where men and animals live lives brought close by natural laws that are no longer in force in the centers of civilization.

When the sun was tinting the reddish sides of the distant mountains and sparkling on the snow-capped peaks, and the plain was flooded

with the morning light, Wallace was astride his horse and riding rapidly along the trail. Firmly bound to his saddle was a small iron box about twelve inches in length and six inches in width and depth. He had turned away from the scene of his first meeting with sorrow and death, after reverently burying the bones of his father and removing from beneath the stone doorstep the iron box, which he had been told was to be opened only after his father's death. He had not the heart to examine its contents then, even had he not realized his own necessities. He knew it must be at least a day's journey to the nearest town, —and he had but a scant supply of food left in his saddle bags. He had no inclination to go back to the old man he had left but the day before, for he felt he could not bear the ordeal of answering questions, which naturally would be asked, and could give him neither comfort nor aid.

He was alone and must now begin a new life in a world of strange men, of whom he knew nothing,— a world of conditions and customs to him unknown.

Fear had no place in his heart, for he had never known it,— the nearest approach to it was caution, in which his father had care-

fully trained him, especially with regard to being discovered by Indians.

Onward he rode toward the great new world, deeply conscious of his great loss, but borne up by the philosophy he had learned under his father's instruction.

"The inevitable will happen," his father had often said to him, "and it must be accepted without question. It must be made the foundation of greater things to come." Thus he approached the threshold of a new life with all the confidence of inexperienced youth and the courage born of a perfect physique,—learned in the sciences and languages, but ignorant as a child of the customs of civilization and the vital conditions that make the world what it is.

As the night shut down he struck a trail over a Divide, which he knew must be the one travelled by the mail-carrier and he realized that if he followed it he would finally come to a town.

The full moon made it easy to continue his journey and he pushed forward hoping soon to find a suitable place to rest, where both horse and rider could find water to slake a consuming thirst.

"Come on, Dandy," he said, "there must be

water somewhere. We'll keep on until we find it, so cheer up, Old Boy. I know it's been a hard day, but we'll soon get into some place where a man and a horse can find whatever they need.

"We'll feel a little out of place, at first, I suspect, but it must be better than being alone, as we are, now, Dandy. Alone,—just two of us, and not another soul of us,—*alone*. You understand, don't you Dandy? Of course you do. You always know what I am talking about, you good old pal. You're the dearest old horse that ever breathed." Wallace leaned forward and smoothed the mane of his horse as a father might have the hair of his only son.

As they caught the first glimpse of the moonlit basin beyond the Divide, Wallace reined up his horse and looked at something that filled him with wonder. In the distance, but lying on the earth, was a brilliant star, stretching its rays of light toward them as if inviting them to approach.

"What is it, Dandy?" he queried of the horse, no less attracted by the strange phenomenon than himself.

"It can't be a star on the ground, and it's not a fire for it does not glow and flicker."

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For a long time they stood motionless studying this mysterious light, until Wallace exclaimed:—

“I know what it is. It’s an artificial light. I can just recall something of the kind we had when I was a little fellow. Father called them candles, but after they were burned up we used to sit in the firelight. It’s in a cabin and there must be someone living there.

“Come on! Dandy, we’re out of the Wild-lands at last, we’re over the last Divide.”

CHAPTER VI

The Threshold of a New World.

WALLACE WILLIAMS was not a prepossessing looking individual to have walk in upon a telegraph operator at a time when the railway station was deserted and no passenger train due until morning, and it was not strange that, timidly entering where the light of a lamp fell upon him, he found himself looking into the muzzle of a big pistol held firmly in the hand of a man who was scarcely visible behind a partition.

The operator was not in the habit of taking chances. He held an important telegraphic post at the foot of the mountains, where a railroad hold-up was not an unknown thing, and he believed in being the first to act. A glimpse of the strange horseman through the window, and the cautious way in which the new arrival had come to the door and entered, was not at all to his liking. He saw before him a youth of powerful build, dressed in a

self-made suit of deerskin, hatless and almost as brown as an Indian. The fine features, light wavy, short hair, and almost shy look; as well as the surprise which showed in the clear, large eyes, gave him a feeling of confidence,—yet, not sufficient to make him lower the gun. The small town was nearly a mile away, and he was alone and on duty, so he was not prepared to accept hurriedly formed impressions.

“What’s your business?” he demanded in a tone which was neither friendly nor particularly aggressive.

“I’m looking for a town. I’m a stranger, here. I thought you might direct me. I fear I am intruding.”

The quiet but firm voice of Williams, and the manner of speech, so unlike the usual visitor at the station, caused the operator to lower his weapon and gaze with new curiosity at the boy before him.

“You look it,” he remarked. “You see I don’t get many callers at this hour of the night, and those who might drop in are not always the kind one would like to meet unprepared for emergencies. I guess you thought me rather ‘uncordial’ when you stepped in that door. Come in. What can I do for you?”

“I would like to get to some town,” ex-

plained Williams, "I've come out of the Wild-lands, where I've lived all my life. I don't know much about towns and people. We're alone, now,— my horse and I. Our ranch was burned by the Indians, and my father was killed while I was out on the trail to send a letter. There was nothing to keep me there, so I came out."

"What's that? Indians! Are those pests up to their tricks again? Where do you come from?" questioned the railroad man, now fired with interest.

"Back—a long way back, in the Wild-lands," answered the youth. "Way beyond the regular trails, where no one ever goes except the Indians, and *they* hardly ever go there. About fifty miles further in than old man Coltons, who puts-up the stage passengers over night and takes care of any mail."

"What's your name?" asked the operator.

"Williams,— Wallace Williams," he answered.

"And are you the son of the 'old hermit,' who has lived up in the mountains for so many years — no one knows where?"

"Yes, I'm his son."

"And you say the Indians found your ranch and burned it,— and killed your father?"

"Yes, I saw them as they left by the Pass

on the other side of the Basin, but I did not know, then, what they had done."

"What did you do when you found out?"

"It was too late to do anything. Father was dead and there was nothing left of the ranch, so I started to find a town."

"Come inside," exclaimed his new acquaintance, throwing open a door to the operator's office. You must be hungry. Here, eat some of my supper,—there's more than enough for two. You look about done up."

"I'd like a drink of water, and some for Dandy, my horse, if you've got it. We're parched with thirst."

"Here, help yourself and I'll take some to your horse," said the operator, now perceiving the exhausted condition of his guest, and pointing to the water in the station.

"I'd better give it to him," said Wallace. He doesn't know anyone but me, and he might not understand. You see we've grown up together."

"Well, you drink first, and then we'll go out and look after 'Dandy.'"

"I think," said Wallace, "he's worse off than I am. I'll drink after I've given some to him,—if you don't mind?"

"Well, I do mind. You drink that," said the

operator passing him a glass, "while I get a lantern so we can take him round to the tank. Then he can drink the railroad supply dry, if he likes," and he hurried out for the lantern. He came back as Wallace emptied the third glass. "Now come on, and eat that as we go," and he pushed a thick sandwich into Wallace's hand.

When Dandy had had his fill of water and was peacefully feeding on the fresh grass that grew in patches along the side of the railroad, they came back to the table and sat down to share the operator's supper.

It was the first time Wallace had ever seen anyone of about his own age, and good fortune had thrown him in with a good example of the best of young telegraph men.

They had hardly begun to eat before his host was again questioning him about the Indians, and Wallace told him in detail all that he had seen.

"You wait a minute," said his new friend, "I'll wire 'The Fort,' and they'll run them down and wipe out the whole lot. They've been trying to get some excuse to get after that band. They've been hearing bad reports of them, but have never been able to fix any real crimes against them. It is just one small

lot who have not been brought to realize that Uncle Sam's boys are running this country."

He left Williams at the table, while he sat down at the telegraph instrument and began clicking off a long message. The boy watched him, not comprehending what he was doing. When he came back to his supper, Wallace looked at him for an explanation.

"What were you doing, there?" he asked.

"Sending a message to 'The Fort,' telling them what you told me."

"Where is 'The Fort?'" asked Wallace.

"On the further side of the mountains," he replied.

"And how can you tell them, in that way?"

"Why, it's a telegraph. Don't you understand? I spell out the words by dashes and dots that represent the letters, and they take them down."

"But, they must be miles and miles from here. How can they hear the clicks?"

"Over the wire. Didn't you ever see a telegraph instrument before?"

"No. I've read about it."

"Come here and I'll explain it to you." The operator then showed him the workings of this era making invention, and while they were

looking at it, the instrument began clicking off a return message:

"Captain Fuller says, he will start with a troupe of cavalry, at once. He knows about where they will be hiding, and will surprise them. If he finds any evidences in their possession, he'll wipe them off the earth. He wants a description of everything they may have taken from the ranch."

Turning to Wallace he continued:

"Give me a list of things they might have carried off with them, and I'll send it on at once. Your father's blood will be avenged, if Captain Fuller gets on their tracks.

"That band of Indians has been committing petty thefts for some time, but they were always too clever to be caught with the goods. They probably thought this act would never be discovered, for it's a long time since any of them dared to do anything as serious as this. This lot, however, has always been a bad one and all they needed was a chance to show that they are just as bad, now, as ever they were."

Wallace then described the branding marks on the horses and cattle, and such things as he thought possibly they might have taken from the ranch, and the message was sent off over the wires.

With all the explanations given of the telegraph, Wallace was awed in the presence of the first of the great wonders of civilization with which he had become familiar on the threshold of the new world, and by which he was to bring unhoped for justice on the murderers of his father.

Later in the night, when he stood beside Dandy, both trembling with excitement and wonder as they watched the passing of a heavy freight train rumbling down the sharp grade at a high rate of speed, the fascination of the unknown and unexplored came over him, and he was anxious to press on to the great centers of life toward which the endless parallel lines of track were leading far away.

When Wallace went back to his first found friend,—he told him that he must hurry on to San Francisco, to look up a Mr. Franklyn Baxter, with whom his father had always kept up a correspondence. Together they made plans for his leaving on the first train; at eleven o'clock the next morning. The operator told him many things he would need to know for such a journey and arranged to take him into

the town before he left, where he could fit-out with suitable clothing, so as to be dressed as was customary in the towns and cities.

Wallace's one great disappointment was to find he could not take Dandy with him, but it was finally arranged that Fred Brown, the telegraph operator, should take him and care for him, as Wallace felt he should be cared for.

Long and many were the instructions given by Wallace about Dandy's comforts and treatment and very binding were the promises demanded by him from Brown,—but it was all settled to the satisfaction, if not the liking, of Wallace, who could not help feeling that he was deserting his oldest and best friend, when Dandy was not to go with him.

During the night they had opened the box Wallace had brought with him, and found one thousand dollars in gold and bills, which were carefully sealed in an oil cloth envelope. They also found statements of additional sums on deposit in Trust Companies in San Francisco, and a copy of his father's will. There was also a letter to Mr. Franklyn Baxter, unsealed and marked to be read by Wallace, which introduced him to his father's attorney, who was to become the executor under the will, and his guardian. A personal letter of advice was

addressed to Wallace, with instructions to go at once to Mr. Baxter in case of any emergency.

All these had been carefully examined during the night, for Wallace had no desire to sleep while Fred Brown was on night duty and was obliged to be awake. Leaving the iron box with Fred, Wallace put the contents in a money belt to take with him on his journey.

Dandy was not at the station to bid his life long friend good-bye. Wallace had decided that he might be difficult to manage, if he saw him leaving on the train, for he had learned to keep his eye on his master like a well-trained dog and it was doubtful if anything could prevent his following the train far across the plains, if he saw him depart.

Wallace had spent the last hour before leaving, in a large box stall with Dandy. It would have sounded strange to unaccustomed ears had they heard the promises and advice Wallace gave his dumb companion, while he held his cheek against the face of this intelligent horse; and the terms of endearment might have been thought excessive, unless one realized that this beautiful creature had been the only object toward which the boy's heart had ever had an opportunity to warm with affection, other than the filial devotion to his father.

Wallace had loved the birds, the flowers, the trees, and all nature; for every normal heart must beat with love for somebody, or something.

Dandy seemed to understand, to some extent, what Wallace said to him. He certainly realized that he was to be left behind, and when his young master started to go, he seized his coat sleeve and held him fast.

If ever a horse tried to talk, Dandy did then; and only after ten minutes of assurances and promises that the separation would not be for long, did he reluctantly release his hold and, leaning far over the stall, watched his trusted friend disappear through the door.

As Wallace hurried away, he continued to call back,—“Good-bye, Dandy, Good-bye, Dandy.” He could hear the horse whinney, again and again, in answer to his calls,—an answer that was as full of meaning as if spoken in words.

When Wallace stepped aboard the train, still clasping Fred’s hand, two loyal friends parted with assurances to meet again as soon as might be possible.

During the first hour on the train, Wallace could not keep his mind off the two friends he was leaving behind; one a dumb animal—

had been his only playmate from childhood, and the other his new found friend; but his loneliness at last gave way to interest in his new situation.

The experience of a first ride in a railroad train, especially when it is taken after a person has advanced beyond childhood, and in a "Limited Express," is full of amazing and awe inspiring wonders. During the day Wallace adapted himself to his new surroundings and partly comprehended the mechanical wonders of luxurious seats and furnishings, and the mysteries of the adjustable "bunks," as he called them. When night came and it was time for him to try his skill at climbing into an upper berth, he endeavored to repose himself mentally and physically for a night's rest.

It took him some hours to become convinced that the train would not jump the tracks when running at such a high rate of speed. But his education had not been neglected and, although the experience was a new one, he had been so well informed by his father of the methods of travel and customs, that he readily learned by observation much about things he had only heard of, before he came out of the Wildlands.

In his berth he gave himself up to reviewing the events of this, his first journey. He smiled

as he thought of his confusion when he tried to order a dinner in the dining car, and how much he had learned during his first meal in a public eating place. Observation, was now his key to knowledge. Books were, at least for the present, of little value when compared with his eyes.

He quickly learned to discriminate between persons of refinement,—from whom he could learn the recognized customs of life; and the ignorant and vulgar populace,—who never will learn by observation nor effort, to acquire decent manners. He found that certain people about him appealed to his senses, as persons he would like to know, while others seemed either uninteresting or even offensive to him.

He compared all men with his one ideal of a gentleman:—his own father, who had never allowed the rough life of the wilderness to tempt him to neglect the beneficial customs of civilization.

Women were a strange and fascinating mystery to Wallace. During the first day's journey he had found himself constantly studying a beautiful young mother who was traveling with her two children, and sat across the aisle from him. Her sweet voice fascinated him, and he wondered if all women had voices as sweet,

when compared with the heavier voices of men. Her devotion to her children,—a boy of six and a little girl of four—filled him with admiration, and he formed wonderful ideals of what womanhood represented among the people of the world.

After a night in a sleeping-car berth with but little sleep, Wallace longed for a morning plunge in the cold mountain lake to which he had been accustomed from childhood. Going into the wash-room, he watched those who were already there and solved the problem of the strange faucets. When his turn came he filled the bowl and went through what seemed to him a poor excuse for a morning bath.

During the long run to the Pacific Coast he was learning something each hour, and by the time he arrived in San Francisco, he had not only become accustomed to the strange contrivances of modern clothing,—such as buttons, studs, collars, and neckties,—but had acquired a fairly good idea of general matters in the big world, of which he had so lately become a part.

CHAPTER VII

A Chance Acquaintance.

WHEN Wallace arrived at San Francisco and walked out of the Ferry House at the lower end of Market Street, he determined to go at once to the Call Building to see Mr. Baxter, his father's lawyer.

As he came into the street he was greatly confused by the noise and the bustle of the crowds about him. He could not understand his own feelings. He was not afraid, yet, he felt more alone in this world of many people, than he had ever felt in the deepest wilds of the mountains. He hardly dared go forward and mingle with the hurrying throng, that poured from the big buildings and flooded the streets like a river overflowing its banks.

He stepped back into a recess in the wall of the building and stood there half stupefied with wonder at all his active brain was drinking in. He had seen something of the life in towns and cities, from the car windows while on his

journey, but such a sight as he beheld here, in front of the Ferry terminal, was beyond his wildest dreams.

He leaned against the building, fearing he would be drawn into this current of humanity and carried on and on,—where, he knew not.

“I’ll wait a little till this crowd goes by,” he thought. “There must have been a great many ferries coming in at the same time, to unload so many people.” They’ll soon get out of the way, then I can get used to this thing by degrees. I begin to think the trails in the hills are easier to follow than the streets of a town, if you have to mix up with such herds of people. Why it’s like a stampede of cattle.”

While he waited he looked up in amazement at the towering buildings, on either side of Market Street. He rubbed his eyes and wondered for a moment if he could really be awake.

“Of course I’ve read of such things,” he said, half aloud, “but I had no idea of what it meant. I’ve simply got to stand here until I get by brain untwisted, for I’ll never be able to walk amid such confusion. How can they stand such a racket? Why it’s impossible to hear oneself think, with the clanging of the bells on those street cars and the rattling of wheels over the pavements.”

Again he looked at the moving mass of people about him and realized that it was not growing smaller, in fact, it seemed to be increasing. Hundreds of men, women and children were coming as well as going in every direction; for it was at the close of the business day and all were hurrying home to their evening meal.

"Well," he said aloud, anxious to see if he could hear his own voice above the turmoil, "I must pull my wits together and get used to conditions as they are. I can't stand here forever. But which way shall I go to find the Call Building?"

"What are you looking for,— the Call Building?" asked a boy of about his own age who had been standing near him and heard his remark.

"Yes," said Wallace, looking at his neighbor and wondering how he could have overheard his question amid so much noise.

"I think I can direct you, although I am a stranger here myself. I remember seeing it today when I was walking around looking for work. It's one of the big buildings and is named after the newspaper which is published there. I stopped to get a 'Call' to look over the advertisements, hoping to find some work.

Now let me see if I can tell you how to get there. I've been wandering around so much that I'm somewhat mixed, myself.

"Yes," he continued, looking about, "It's up this way. I guess I'd better walk along a bit with you and then I can point it out, if I can recognize it when I see it, as I think I can. I usually keep my head pretty well and know where I am, but I've been in a half dream all day and kind of worried, so I have only a hazy notion of what it looks like. I'll know it if I get my eyes on it."

"But won't it be too much trouble?" asked Wallace. "I think I can find it if you start me in the right direction."

"Trouble? — Not a bit. I'm only too glad to have someone to talk to after being alone all day. I was standing here wondering what I'd do next. Come on. This way," exclaimed the boy as he led the way through the throng that was crowding about the station.

Wallace followed, now entirely relieved of the first sense of confusion. It was very different when he had someone to talk with and to guide him, and he was glad that this boy had overheard the remark he addressed to himself.

"He's a very pleasant fellow," thought Wal-

lace as he hurried along behind him, where the crowd was thickest. "He is very thoughtful and obliging."

He had observed that this boy was unlike others he had seen in the throng about him. He carried himself with as much self-respect as those who were carefully dressed and looked prosperous, yet he was clad in a gray flannel shirt, a coat that seemed too large for him and a pair of trousers that only reached to his boot-tops. His clothes seemed to be rather of the makeshift order. Wallace had received considerable instruction with regard to the proper wearing apparel from his friend Fred before he was allowed to depart for the big city, and though he had seen many boys who were strangely clad, even to the point of being in rags, his observation convinced him that his new companion was not accustomed to such clothing. He had noticed that while talking the boy had given a pull to the loose coat, to keep it in place, and had shoved his hands in his pockets and pushed down his trousers as far as possible to make them appear longer.

What impressed him most was the manly bearing of this new acquaintance and the well proportioned features of the face,— from which

looking out two, big, honest, blue eyes, that impressed him with the sincerity of the soul behind them. Wallace judged men as he had his animal friends,—by their eyes,—and he felt he should like this young fellow who had been the first to befriend him in this strange city.

The sidewalk was now less crowded and his guide dropped back to his side. As they walked up the busy thoroughfare they talked of the city and the many things which were all new to Wallace. He confided to his companion how wonderful it all was to him, since he had always lived in the depth of the Wildlands, and told him about his life and experiences.

Dick in return told Wallace of the wreck of the dynamite ship, and about the rescue of Patsy and himself.

"There's the Call Building," exclaimed his guide, as he saw in the distance a big steel constructed edifice that towered far above its neighbors.

"How stupid of me not to have recognized it at a distance," he continued, "But, you see, when I saw it before I was on the sidewalk,—right up against it,—and did not get a view of the top. In fact, I guess I was walking with my head down, thinking.

"Well," he said, after a pause, and with a strangely lowered voice, "I guess I can't do any more for you, so I'll wish you luck and say good-bye."

"Can't you go up there with me?" asked Wallace. "That is, if you have nothing else you want to do? I am not anxious to lose such good company, I assure you, and I was in an awful muddle until you led me out of it. I guess I'd have been standing there yet,—except for you."

"Why certainly I can," exclaimed the boy, his eyes opening with appreciation of an opportunity to prolong this pleasant companionship.

As they walked on they talked fast and more confidentially than before, a bond of friendship having sprung into recognition between them as they were both strangers in a strange city.

When they reached the Call Building, Wallace remarked: "I want to find Mr. Franklyn Baxter, a lawyer, who has an office here."

"Let's look over the names of the tenants," said his companion. "Ah, yes, here it is."

"Come on, we'll go up at once," suggested Wallace. "By the way, what's your name?"

"Richard Clarkson — they call me Dick."

"Well, come on Dick, we'll climb toward heaven," said Wallace.

"I better not go up with you," said Dick hesitating, and casting a glance toward his boots that were very visible below his trousers.

"Why not," asked Wallace in surprise, "You're not going to desert me at this time, are you? You know, I'm not feeling very courageous about going so high up in the air, even in a solid looking building like this. I was never more than one story from the ground, that I can remember.

"But," ventured Dick, "I look so shabby in these clothes. The salt water cut down the size of my 'pants' and as I had no coat I'm wearing one the sailors gave me. I'd not like anyone I know,—or rather that you know,—to see me. I'll get a decent suit when I get work. I'll wait down here, if you want me to, till you come out."

"Well, that's better than being deserted," laughed Wallace, "but if I don't come back soon, you come after me, for you've got to see me through this experience. I may not find Mr. Baxter and if I've lost you in the meantime, I'll be all alone again. You know, two persons all alone and separated, make two

very unhappy people, whereas, the same two people brought together by good fortune, leaves neither one alone, and makes both of them happy. That's my view of the case."

"And mine too," agreed Dick. "I'll be waiting here. I say, what's your name? In case you get lost up there I may have to inquire for you."

"Wallace Williams. I never had a nickname, for Father said he liked to call me Wallace. You'll have to invent one if you are not satisfied with Wallace."

"I'll think it over while you are upstairs," said Dick, laughing. "If you'd been to a public school you'd have had one the very first day."

When Wallace started to mount the stairs, Dick called out:

"Hold on, don't try to walk up. Take the elevator."

"What do you mean?" asked Wallace stopping on the third step.

"Why, get into one of those cars, there, and they'll take you up."

"What — those cages?" questioned Wallace, looking at the elevators to which Dick pointed.

"Certainly," said Dick, "They'll land you on the right floor, in a jiffy."

As Wallace looked doubtfully at these contrivances, he saw one of them shoot upward as another dropped through the floor and stopped before him.

"How far up do they go?" he asked, filled with curiosity and going closer to study the principle of construction.

"To the top," Dick replied, smiling at the evident surprise of his friend.

"Well," said Wallace. "I guess they're all right, but I think I'd rather walk."

"Walk? Why you'll never get there," laughed Dick. "Get in that next car and you'll enjoy the experience. You may as well get used to them today as any other time."

"All right, I'll resign myself to my fate, but if the thing drops, you be on hand to dig out my mangled remains. Farewell, I'm going heavenward long before I expected to take such a journey."

The elevator-man had overheard the last remarks, and in a spirit of fun, started the car at full speed. Wallace thought his knees would collapse under him and his heart seemed to jump into his throat. When the car came to a sudden stop his legs straightened out and his heels left the floor.

"Hum," he ejaculated, as he walked out,

"That's quick enough, but I'll have to get used to it before I feel quite steady on my legs. It's worse than a bucking-bronco for giving a fellow a shaking up."

Wallace found Mr. Baxter's office locked, and learned from a man in the hall that it would not be open again until morning. Greatly disappointed he returned to Dick, who greeted him with a smile, as he came out of the elevator with a wobbly and uncertain step, suggestive of a sailor just coming a-shore with his "sea-legs" still on.

"Didn't you find him?" inquired Dick.

"No. Closed up for the night."

"What are you going to do?" asked Dick.

"Don't know — haven't thought," said Wallace. "Guess I'll have to wait till morning before I find him."

"Does it make any great difference whether you see him tonight or in the morning? If it does we might find his home address," suggested Dick. "Come along, we'll go to a drug store and look in the directory or telephone book."

Dick led the way and soon they had located

Mr. Baxter's residence, but found he lived in Oakland.

"Do you want to talk to him by telephone?" asked Dick.

"Could I?" said Wallace, wondering at all the conveniences of civilization, which seemed to meet every new condition with which he was confronted.

Dick quickly explained the working of the telephone and Wallace was, at first, inclined to call up the lawyer for the experience of trying this remarkable invention, if for no other reason. Then, on further thought, he decided not to do so, as he had never met him and felt awkward about talking to a person he had never seen.

"I'll wait till morning," he said, "that is, if you will tell me where I can find a hotel to stay in over night."

"Oh, there are plenty of good hotels," said Dick. "I'll point out one to you as we walk along."

When they were again in the street, Wallace remarked:

"I'm getting hungry. Let's go and get something to eat."

Dick's face assumed a dubious expression.

"I don't think I'll eat anything, now," he said. "I'll wait until later."

"Why, aren't you hungry?"

"Oh, I don't care to eat just now."

"Well, then I'll wait till later myself," suggested Wallace. "I'd much rather not eat alone in a strange place."

"You better not wait for me," urged Dick, with an anxious look. "I may not eat till very late."

Wallace, quick to detect the change in Dick's manner, suspected there was some reason for it, and looked sharply at him as he remarked:

"Say Dick, what's the matter? Don't you want to eat with me? Perhaps I am keeping you from going somewhere, or doing something you wish to do."

Dick flushed under the gaze Wallace turned on him, and began to stumble through some explanation, but not being an adept at misrepresentation, suddenly stopped when he saw his words were not making any impression and that Wallace was studying him with a critical and doubting expression.

"It's no use," he exclaimed. "I may as well tell you the truth. I'm no good at deception. The fact is, I'm stone broke and haven't the price of so much as a sandwich. When I

left the ship I felt confident I could get some work along the docks, and so would not take any money from the boys who offered to make up a purse to give me.

"I could not get anything to do yesterday, except helping to unload a truck, for which I got a quarter, and I spent that on food. Later I got the promise of a position as porter, and am to go there tomorrow morning. I got it just before I met you at the ferry."

"Well, then you come with me," exclaimed Wallace. "We'll have all we want to eat, for I've plenty of money for both of us. When did you eat last?" he asked.

"I had a glass of milk this morning," answered Dick, shyly. "It's mighty good of you to offer to take me along, but I don't feel quite like accepting — for why should I expect such kindness from one who does not know me and for whom I can do nothing in return?"

There was a pained and disappointed look in Wallace's eyes.

"Do you think I'm the kind of a fellow who could sit down and eat alone while a friend was hungry?"

"But have I the right to make such use of one who is willing to call me a friend, on so short an acquaintance? That seems to me

to be pretty near begging. I'd rather go hungry than have you think I have stuck to you during the last hour with the hope of any reward. I'm up against hard luck, but I'm no 'grafter.' You've been good enough to call me a friend. That is more to me than food, and I want our friendship to be more than a passing one."

"It will last a life time, if I have my way," exclaimed Wallace. I don't know much about the world or its ways, but I think I have made no mistake in my judgment of you, and as I never met but one fellow of my own age before — the one I told you about who is keeping my horse, Dandy,— I propose to keep your friendship, if you give me half a chance. Now that's settled, as far as I'm concerned, and we'll hurry along to the nearest place to get a solid meal.

"You'll come, won't you, Dick?" urged Wallace. "Remember that I'm alone in the world and a friendship means more to me than it does to you, who have had so many all through your life."

Dick grabbed Wallace's hand, as he cleared his throat which was choked with gratitude.

"This is a strange experience, but one that makes a fellow feel that sometimes a true

friendship is born of adversity. There's my hand as a pledge of a loyal friendship that you will never find lacking in sincerity. Wallace you're one in a thousand — yes, one in a million. I'm certainly in luck to have run across you."

"Same here," said Wallace. "Now for some eating place. What's the matter with this place?" he continued, looking through the windows of a well appointed dining room they were then passing.

"This is one of the best hotels," said Dick. "The prices will be too high."

"Never mind the prices," said Wallace in a happy mood. "We'll enjoy this first meal together regardless of cost. I don't know much about the value of money, yet, for I'm just now handling it for the first time in my life. I'll have to get you to give me a lot of advice and information about things I know nothing of.

"By the way, where are you living?"

"No where in particular," replied Dick.

"Where did you sleep last night?"

"Well, I didn't sleep much. I was walking about and finally sat on one of the park benches. I didn't have the money to get a room."

"Why don't we get a room in this hotel," suggested Wallace, "and you stay here with me until we both know more of our future plans?"

"That would be fine," said Dick, "But," he added with a sudden change of tone, "I guess we better go somewhere else. This is an expensive and dressy place."

"I didn't think about that," said Wallace, looking at his friend.

"We'll fix that," he exclaimed cheerfully, after a moment's thought and a glance down the street. "I've made up my mind to go to a first class hotel, so come on."

He led the way across a street and started to go into a big clothing and furnishing store.

"Hold on," called Dick. "Where are you going?"

"In here, to get a new outfit, for both of us."

"No, Wallace. I don't want you to do that. Let's think of some other plan."

"It's the only one. You've got to have decent clothes to start right in the world. That's what my friend Brown told me, and I've already learned by observation that he was right. I'm determined to see you fixed-up, so come on."

You agreed to be a loyal friend and you must let me do this much for you."

"But it will cost a lot of money," said Dick, appreciating the friendship that Wallace was proving by one act of kindness after another, yet hesitating to accept so much.

"I don't care what it costs. It is the first time I've ever had a chance to do something for another fellow and I'm going to enjoy the privilege. I've more money than I know how to use. Come on Dick, let's hurry. I am as hungry as a bear. Get the out-fit, then we'll go to that hotel and get a room, and a good big meal. I want to buy some more things and you can help me by telling me what I need. I only got enough to bring me to 'Frisco.' Come on. We'll out-fit together."

"Then you must let me repay you as fast as I can from my wages," urged Dick, realizing that he must get decent clothing soon, and feeling convinced that Wallace was sincere in his desire to help him get started on his way to success.

"You may if you like, but only when it is really convenient," Wallace replied as he led the way into the store.

CHAPTER VIII

Learning Worldly Wisdom.

IT was a pair of neatly dressed boys who stepped up to the desk of the hotel and asked about rooms, as they passed a new dress-suit case to the bell-boy.

"I have only one vacant room in the house," said the clerk, "and that is a large one, with a bath. That would be ten dollars a day, with meals,—for two."

"That's too luxurious for us," said Dick.

"It's one of the finest in the house," added the clerk.

"Well, we'll take it," said Wallace, addressing the clerk, and then, aside to Dick, "I'd like to try the best in this house. It must be pretty fine. You know I've got to learn every thing by experience. I may not feel like spending money so freely, after I know more of city life."

"All right," remarked Dick. "This is your 'party' and I'm only a guest, so it's for you to decide, but it seems a lot to pay. Why, we

could go to a boarding house and live a week for what this will cost for one day."

"Well, we can do that later. We'll try this for a day or two," said Wallace, and he motioned to Dick to sign first, in response to the clerk's request to register their names.

"Will you go up to the room, now?" asked the clerk.

"Let's send our baggage up," suggested Dick, "and go to dinner first. We can wash-up down here. The odor of food that comes through that door makes me realize how hungry I am."

Wallace agreed, and they were soon seated at a table studying the bill-of-fare.

"You order for both," said Wallace, "Then I'll see how it's done. I had a lot of trouble getting used to this kind of thing, in the dining-car. Order a big dinner, for I'm ready for it. We'll just sit here and eat, till we can't put any more away. Let's enjoy ourselves and get our money's worth."

"All right," said Dick. "I can order a dinner that will keep us busy for a while. I understand that art, for I used to live very near New York and often dined there at the big hotels."

"Well do it in the correct way, so that I may learn a lesson from your example."

Dick ordered an elaborate dinner. As the waiter left the table Wallace remarked:

"You see you can repay me fully for the little I can do for you, by just such lessons as this. I find I pick up customs readily, because of the many talks I had with my father about all the things which I might someday see in the great outside world, but when I'm alone I get rather confused and feel embarrassed about the correct thing to do. You cannot realize how glad I am to have a companion in this great city. I believe a fellow can get more lonely in a place like this, when he does not know anyone, than he ever could in the Wildlands. I was feeling that way when you spoke to me at the ferry."

"I think you are right about that," said Dick. "I was never so impressed with my being alone in the world, as I was when I stood beside you there,—before I overheard your remark about locating the Call Building. Why! I did not feel so much alone when I was floating on that raft in the boundless sea. There, at least I had that little dog, who was in sympathy with me, and to whom I could talk. Here, in all the crowd, I did not know

one soul who cared whether I was dead or alive. There's no doubt that the loneliest place on earth is to be unknown in the midst of a multitude of people, where everyone else seems to have a friend to talk to."

"By the way," interrupted Wallace. "What ever became of that dog? Your story was interrupted at that point by our reaching the Call Building. I quite forgot to ask you."

"I left him with the 'Jackies' on the ship. You see he had been on shipboard from the time he was a puppy and it seemed to me it would be cruel to take him ashore with me, when I had no settled plans."

"Didn't it make you feel mighty sorry to have to leave him behind?"

"I should say it did. I had to wink my eyes a few times, I'll confess, but the boys had all learned to love him so much that they called him their Mascot, and I felt the only thing to do was to leave him with them. He wanted to come along, however, and jumped into the boat twice, but we put him back on deck and one of the boys held him while we got away."

"You should have seen him struggle to get free. I believe he would have jumped overboard if they had not held him."

"Say, Wallace! Let's go out and see him,

before the ship sails.— Would you like to? ”

“ Yes. That would be fine. Shall we go to-morrow? ”

“ If I don’t have to work too late.”

“ All right, we’ll do it. It will give me a chance to see a man-of-war. I’ve seen pictures of them and read descriptions, but I never thought I’d really go aboard one. It will be great fun for me, and then I would like to see that dog. By the way, what did you say his name was? ”

“ ‘ Patsy.’ I don’t know where he got it, but that was what the sailors called him, so he still goes by that name.”

“ Well, we’ll call on ‘ Patsy,’ and perhaps we can bring him back with us. Together, we could take care of him. He’d soon get accustomed to living ashore.”

“ Oh, Wallace! could we? ” exclaimed Dick, delighted at the thought of again having Patsy with him. Then, thoughtfully, “ but would it be right to take him away from the boys on the boat, when they have been so kind to him, — and to me? ”

“ Well, we’ll see. We might all agree to let Patsy decide. We could bring him ashore, and then see whether he would follow you, or go back in the boat with the boys.”

"That's fair and I think the boys would agree to it. I wonder which Patsy would do?"

As the dinner progressed the boys talked much of their previous experiences. Each was surprised and fascinated with the stories related by the other, so that time passed rapidly and they became more and more interested in one another. When they left the table, they wandered into the street and walked slowly along observing the passing throng.

Wallace was greatly impressed with the brilliancy of the electric lights and other wonders of the night scene in a large city. Dick explained everything with great interest and proved himself a good tutor to this Son-of-the-wilderness. The thing that attracted the attention of Wallace, above all else, was the pretty girls. As he and Dick passed group after group, Dick had difficulty in prevailing upon his friend to walk along, and not to stop and watch them. The thousand and one questions he had to answer amused him greatly, because of the ignorance and innocence of his companion and his insatiable curiosity. Dick, however, was equal to the emergency, for he had grown up in the suburbs of the great city of New York, and had had the usual opportunities of boyhood to gain a knowledge of life

by contact with all sorts and conditions of people, such as every school-boy is thrown in with,—among whom he must carefully pick his associates.

A level head and sterling character had led Dick safely along the way-of-life and the influence of a pure and devoted mother had often helped him over the rough places, where otherwise he might have stumbled.

It was fortunate for Wallace that he had formed his first intimate friendship with a boy of high character, but in no sense a "prude," or what is often referred to as a "goody-goody-boy."

Dick was frank and straightforward in his explanations and advice, realizing the responsibility that fell on his young shoulders. By the time they returned to their hotel, Wallace was less curious and thoroughly warned of the pit-falls that confront a youth when set adrift, alone, in the great world.

Wallace had by inheritance a high regard for all that was good and noble. His father had instilled into his mind the deep fundamental principles of right and wrong, but had avoided details and explanations, believing his son would be able to solve all problems when forced to come in contact with actual condi-

tions which are not easily described to a boy, familiar with nothing but Nature as it is found in its pure and perfect state in the forests and among the hills.

One thing, however, was now firmly planted in the mind of Wallace;— That the existence of pretty girls made life in the world a much more interesting thing than that in the Wild-lands, from which he had so recently come forth.

“Let’s stand here for a few minutes and watch the people,” said Wallace, as he drew Dick close to the window of a store. “I cannot get over my curiosity to know where they all come from, and where they are going.”

The store had been closed for the night and there were no lights in the windows, so as they stood there they attracted no attention. Wallace’s sensitive ear quickly caught the sound of voices coming from the dark entrance to the store. Two men were talking in a low tone to avoid being overheard.

“He’ll get her all right,” said one. “She goes to the drug-store for a glass of soda-water almost every night. He’s a slick one, and you can gamble on his working his end of the game.”

"But will she be alone?" asked his companion.

"Yes, she lives only a block away and thinks nothing of running around there alone."

"Well, I'll get the money, if he gets the girl.— But, it's to be on the square and no harm is to come to her, and no rough handling."

"That's all understood. He'll see that she is not harmed. He knows that he'd be up against it if anything happened to her before she is taken home.

"Once we get the money, and get her back home, safe and sound, they'll never say a word to the police, or even the neighbors."

Wallace had grabbed Dick's arm to attract his attention to the conversation, but he was further away and as his hearing was not so keen as that of the boy from the Wildlands, he could not catch the remarks.

"What are they talking about?" asked Wallace, not able to understand the plot that was being discussed so near him.

"I can't hear them," said Dick, moving over and looking into the doorway.

Before Wallace could tell Dick of what he had overheard, the two men had quickly disappeared from the doorway.

"I can't repeat the conversation, Dick," said Wallace, after trying to do so, and causing Dick to laugh at him because of his ignorance of the world. "But, I can't help thinking those men meant some bad business."

"Why, you said, you heard them say that the girl must not be harmed. Forget it, Wallace, it's some kind of a prank or joke. If it was anything serious, do you think they'd be talking it over here in the public streets?"

"They didn't think I could hear them," said Wallace. "But, I guess you're right. I'm still pretty green and not accustomed to this kind of thing. Let's walk along."

"Dick," he said, as they approached the hotel. "You've rendered me a great service tonight, for you have shaped my thoughts for a life time. How different my career might have been had I gathered my information from other sources, which might have led me far astray before I knew where I was going. Now, I know what is before me. I start out with my eyes open, and I must pick and choose between good and bad, for my joys or sorrows will be largely of my own making."

"Do not think I am perfect, nor take me for an example," protested Dick, impressed with the serious tone of Wallace's voice. "I

am only human, but I was properly instructed by a devoted mother, and I try to keep my ideals high, even if I cannot live up to them. One can never climb higher than his ambitions."

"I understand, Dick. I can see many struggles ahead of me during my life, but you have given me ideals to strive for, and I can never thank you enough for what you have told me tonight."

It was getting late as the boys entered the hotel and they were ready for a good night's rest. When they got into the beautifully furnished room that had been reserved for them, Wallace was greatly interested in everything from the artistic wall paper to the richly upholstered furniture. The large brass bed with its snowy linen, the big mirrors, and the general appointments, all appealed to his natural refinement, which he had inherited from his parents. It was, however, the big white tub in the bath room that fascinated him most, as Dick filled it with water.

"Well, that's like bringing the 'swimming-place' into your house," he said. "It's limited in area, but the water will feel just as good, I have no doubt. Say, Dick! I do love the water,—don't you?"

"Well, Mother used to say, I'd go swimming in a wash-tub, if there was no lake or river near. She told me once that the theory of our having descended from monkeys could not apply to me, for I certainly must have 'evolved from a duck.'"

"That bath-tub is worth the whole ten dollars," remarked Wallace. "You know I wondered what the clerk meant when he said, 'with a bath.' I was going to ask you, but forgot. I thought he was criticising our personal appearance and that he was hinting that we needed a bath."

"Perhaps he was not so far from the truth, in my case, for I have not had one since I left the ship and can surely enjoy this tub to-night." "Well, let's get ready," suggested Wallace, "as we both seem to be of one mind on the subject."

They were not long in slipping out of their clothing and might have been a couple of small boys on the bank of a river, so much did they enjoy this opportunity to again get into the water,—even if only what could be held in a generous bath-tub. It was arranged that Wallace was to have the first plunge as it was a new experience to him.

"I don't like the idea of not being able to

dive in," he said. "That's the only way to go into the water."

"Well, I wouldn't try diving in that tub, if I were you," laughed Dick.

"I know what I'll do," suggested Wallace. "I'll stretch myself along this edge and roll in." And he proceeded to carry out his plan. Dick watched the experiment from the door, and laughed heartily as this powerful mountain boy balanced himself on the slippery edge of the tub and then fell heavily to the floor instead of in the water.

"Not quite as easy as it looks,—is it?" roared Dick, seeing that Wallace was greatly surprised, but in no way hurt by the fall.

"I slipped," exclaimed Wallace, much annoyed at the exhibition he had given.

"Oh, really?" said Dick, trying to assume a serious air. "I thought you were trying to strike the floor and bounce back into the tub."

Wallace appreciated the joke even though it was on himself, and laughed loud and long, when as he started to get up the rugs slid across the tiled floor and let him down with a heavy bump, sprawling like a crab.

"I guess I will have to get accustomed to these civilized bathing machines," he remarked. "I am not so clumsy on the banks of a stream."

Someday, I'll prove that to you, if we get a chance for a real swim."

When the boys had enjoyed a refreshing bath, they tumbled into the comfortable bed. They were ready for a good night's sleep and soon were in dreamland.

Wallace dreamed that he was riding Dandy along the narrow edge of a precipice, when a landslide carried him hundreds of feet into the gulch below him.

Dick dreamed that he was again tossing in the gale on his unsteady raft, which turned over and threw him into the sea.

They both awoke at the same moment. The building was trembling and the floor seemed to rise and fall with a rocking sensation.

"What's happened?" cried Wallace as they jumped to their feet, and staggered like drunken men.

Dick's reply was lost in a terrifying roar of falling plaster, as a part of the ceiling fell on the bed and about them, and only missed striking them by a few inches.

"The building's falling down!" yelled Dick, above the screams and uproar that now seemed to rise from every part of the hotel.

"Get out of here, or we'll be buried alive," shouted Wallace.

As they rushed through the hall and down the stairs, they found themselves in a wild and hysterical crowd of men and women. Parts of the building were falling about them and the dust from falling plaster was stifling.

A woman fell half fainting on Wallace's powerful shoulders. Almost unconscious of the act, he seized her and carried her along with him. There was something so uncanny about what they had experienced that brains scarcely worked and people acted only on impulse. The sole purpose seemed to be to escape to the street before being crushed in the shriveling building. Once out of the hotel, the frantic crowd ran into the center of the street, where Wallace's burden slipped from his shoulders and shrieking in delirium, ran up the thoroughfare where she disappeared in the wildly excited and frightened crowd.

CHAPTER IX

A Chinatown Rescue.

IT'S AN earthquake!" exclaimed Dick, as they stood in the street and grasped one another so as not to be separated by the surging mass of humanity. "But, I guess it's all over now."

"Well, I hope it is! I've had enough of city experience to last me for a life time. I think I'll get back to the mountains, where things are solid. I never felt so helpless in my life. I didn't think I had the strength of a rabbit left in my knees, until that woman fell on my back — then I felt I'd got to go on and get her out. Say, Dick, were you ever in one of these infernal things before?"

"Never.— And I don't want to be again."

"Were you frightened?"

"Was I frightened!" Dick exclaimed. "Well, I should say I was. I never expected to see daylight again. I wouldn't have given a postage stamp for our chances of getting out alive."

"Well, I was never really afraid of anything in my life, till this happened, but now I know what fear is. My condition was incomprehensible. It was the most helpless sort of feeling,—as long as I had only myself to think of,—but that woman saved my life by distracting my thoughts from my own danger to hers.

"I say, Wallace," remarked Dick, as he looked about him, when his mental state had assumed an equilibrium, "has it struck you that there is a ludicrous side to this scene, as well as a pathetic one?"

"What do you mean?" asked Wallace, also recovering from the general spell of excitement.

"Why, look at these people. Many of them are in their night clothes and are entirely unconscious of the fact, they are in such a dazed or frightened condition."

"Well, so are we," said Wallace. "I suppose it is hardly good form, even at such a time;—but what are we going to do about it? We've nothing to put on."

"Let's go back and get out our stuff," suggested Dick. "The danger's all over now, and we don't want to lose our outfit just after buying it."

"Do you think it would be safe," asked Wal-

lace, hesitating as he recalled the unpleasant sensations he had felt in the quivering building, and not over-confident of the danger being passed. "You know I have no fear in the 'open,' but these flimsy places, like buildings, rather get on my nerves."

"Oh, it's safe enough now. Don't you see those people going into the hotel?"

"All right. I'll go. If you have the courage, I'll not hang back. I can't be taken by surprise again,—and that's the worst part of the thing, anyway. I shall be prepared for the worst and that's half a battle won."

The boys got safely back to their room, and there was no evidence of more trouble to come.

"What shall we do, now," asked Dick, "Shall we stay here?"

"I think I'd prefer to get outside, if you don't mind," Wallace replied, with considerable feeling. "This place has lost its beauty and charm for me, all at once, and I don't care for it. I know where I am when I'm under the blue sky. Let's take our belongings and get out. There may be another of those shakes, and who knows what will come down the next time."

"All right," agreed Dick. "We'll get into our coats and trousers and put on our boots.

Then throw the rest of the things in the suitcase."

They quickly followed out Dick's suggestion and were about to leave the room, when Wallace said:

"What's the matter with our taking these blankets off the bed? We may need them. I always travelled with a blanket in the hills and I think it would be a good custom to introduce into city life — of this kind."

"That's a good scheme," said Dick, and they rolled up the blankets, preparatory to taking them.

"But," continued Dick. "Have we any right to take them? They don't belong to us."

"We don't intend to steal them," argued Wallace. "We can return them later. This is an emergency measure. When we see how things come out, we'll decide what to do. We have no time to study legal rights, now. If there is another 'quake,' and the building falls, we may as well have these as to leave them to be buried in the débris. We'll save that much for somebody."

"You're right, Wallace. Grab them and come on."

They had barely reached the hall, when a shock, more severe than the first, threw them

against one another, where they clung together to keep from falling.

"It's coming again," shouted Dick, thoroughly frightened and losing the confident attitude he had shown up to this time.

Wallace seemed to acquire a command of himself, at once. His first introduction to fear had taught him a lesson and he was once again the fearless mountain lad who could not be caught unawares a second time and startled into weakness.

Seizing Dick by the arm he dragged him along to the stairway. Big masses of plaster were falling all about them and the confusion and wreckage were far greater than during the first shock. The floor was heaving like the deck of a storm-tossed ship, yet they sped on down the stairs and finally gained the street unharmed.

The crowd into which they rushed was now in a state of greater frenzy than before, and they could hardly make their way into the street sufficiently to escape the falling stone and brick, as the crumbling walls and cornices came tumbling down about them.

Suddenly Wallace hurled Dick from him with a superhuman effort, as a piece of stone, four feet long and at least a foot wide and

thick, fell between them, just where Dick had been.

"Let's get away from here into the open country," yelled Wallace, as he again seized Dick and dragged him along. "The whole city will be down on our heads."

Dick had been so startled by their narrow escape from death that he could say nothing, but hurried forward in the great torrent of people, all of whom seemed carried away with the idea of escape to some place of safety.

Without knowledge of where they were being carried by the swirling tide of frantic refugees, they soon found themselves in a park where they were beyond the limits of the falling débris, and stopped against a tree to get their breath and take their bearings.

"Look!" shouted Dick. "Look! Look!!" screamed a thousand voices, in a horrified chorus, "Fire! Fire!! The city's burning."

From innumerable places, there jumped toward heaven the awful glare of flames. The horror of conflagration was added to the fear of earthquake, and the stricken people could see no hope of escape, for they were now convinced that they were to be consumed by the flames, or engulfed in mighty rents in the earth. Already there were cracks in the streets

and the broken water mains caused floods to rush beneath their feet and suggest to their over-wrought minds, ultimate destruction by drowning.

Curses and prayers now mingled, as familiar friends, while the crying of women and children was heartrending.

It is not surprising that many were driven insane and rushed along tearing at their neighbors like wild beasts, while others affected in the opposite way, were calmed and tried to quiet and guide those who were more excited.

That more were not injured and killed was a miracle, for no stampede of cattle could more than suggest the awful rush for safety of this fighting, crowding mass of human beings.

Wallace had braced his back against the tree and folded his big arms around Dick; who might have been a baby in his powerful grasp. Thus supported they had stood still, while the swirling throng brushed by them on either side, parted by the sturdy tree against which Wallace stood like a rock eternally fixed.

Nothing but a young giant from the wilderness could have held the position and prevented their having been separated, possibly never to meet again.

Dick's slender but wiry form had all the

strength of a hardened athlete, but Wallace possessed more,— the combination of a massive build and natural muscular development of extraordinary power.

By some strange sense, both Wallace and Dick had firmly held on to their blankets and suit-case, although they had nearly been wrenched from their grasp time and again. Now, the crowd was thinning out and they were no longer jostled as they had been.

"They're gone," said Wallace, "and we can follow. They'll never come back."

The boys stood there, silently gazing through the bluish-yellow atmosphere which glowed with the lights of the fires now burning in many places. They were held by a weird fascination as they looked at the solid buildings they had seen but a few hours before,— now leaning together like a lot of drunken sailors. From some of them the walls had fallen into the street and their gaping interiors showed the havoc that had been wrought.

An automobile approached, picking its way through the débris and seams in the street.

"What have they piled up in that?" asked Wallace, pointing and shuddering, yet unable to believe his own eyes.

"They are carrying out the dead," answered Dick, scarcely above a whisper. An appalling hush fell on all about, as they looked on the first victims of the disaster.

"We'll all go the same way," said one woman in the crowd. "It's the end of the world. We may as well stand here. We can't escape," moaned another, as she dropped on her knees in prayer, while others did the same. Someone said, "Chicago has been completely swallowed up, and other cities are in ruins;" and many were convinced that it was the "Last Day."

"Let's try to get out of this crowd by going over to the next block — or further," suggested Dick. "These fires are getting all about us and we'll be hemmed in before long. Perhaps we can buy some food in that store — the man is there. We may need it."

The boys found the German shop-keeper calmly doing business, and at regular prices. They bought all the food they could carry and went slowly up a side street. They did not hurry for everyone was now drifting like an ebb-tide, quietly and in a half dazed condition. The reaction had set in and the general hysteria had subsided.

Slight shocks had occurred at intervals and

the people were expecting another at any moment, but they did not appear to fear them as much as they did the new horror of the on-rushing conflagration. One idea was uppermost in all minds. How to get beyond the fire zone?

Men and women scantily clad, mingled with horses and cattle in the streets and wandered in an aimless way toward any point of supposed safety. Live electric wires were dangling in twisted masses threatening death to anyone who came near.

The boys stepped beside a fire-engine at a corner. The sparks from burning buildings were falling about them like flakes of golden snow, stinging their hands and faces, but they scarcely noticed them.

"Why aren't the engines working?" asked one man of another.

"Can't get any water. The mains are all broken," was the reply.

"Then the city's doomed."

"Yes, and everybody who doesn't get out pretty soon, for the flames are spreading like a prairie-fire."

Wallace and Dick pushed forward again, not knowing which way to turn, but still going on where there seemed to be less fire ahead.

The troops had now arrived and were stopping the people as they pressed forward into the most dangerous places. A man in front of the boys tried to fight his way through the line of soldiers and was shot in the leg when he would not desist. The crowd fled seeking another way to escape. There was hardly a comment,—nothing but a general shudder. Everything that happened was accepted as the natural thing to expect and excitement and emotion had apparently exhausted themselves in the horrible ordeal to which the stricken people had already been subjected.

“We must be in Chinatown,” exclaimed Dick, as two wild-eyed celestials rushed up, carrying big bundles. “It’s a bad part of the city, but I guess all parts are alike tonight and we’ll have to go where we can,—for we can’t turn back.”

The narrow streets through which they began to wind their course became so interesting to the boys that they almost forgot their danger. They stopped to look into several of the quaint Chinese houses, with their strange windows and balconies from which dangled hundreds of lanterns and flags. Inside all was wreckage and disorder, giving evidence of the hurried flight of the doped-bewildered inmates

who were now rushing insanely about the streets and climbing over balconies. Dick commented on the fact that they saw so few women among them. As they looked into one house they saw two Chinamen struggling to lift some heavy beams that had fallen to the floor, while they frantically called for help to others, who passed by heedless of their entreaties.

"Come on," cried Wallace, seizing Dick by the hand. "There must be someone buried there. We'll have to help them."

"Is it safe to go in?" questioned Dick, recalling the frightful stories of murders and horrors he had heard from the sailors who had been through Chinatown.

"There are only two of them," explained Wallace. "They can't harm us. They're men, and not cowards like the rest in the street, who refuse to come to their aid. Come on!"

The Chinamen looked up in astonishment when the boys dashed into the room,—throwing their bundles into a deserted bunk as they passed,—and began working with a will to lift the obstruction from a trap door, which they now observed was held down by the débris.

"Thankee Glod" exclaimed one of them.

"Klistian helpee Chinaman. Klistian savee glirlee. Me go Slunday Schlool. Me allee rightee Klistian."

"Are there any women down there?" asked Dick in amazement.

"One, two, sixee, muchee glirlee," said the other holding up his ten fingers.

The boys had no more time to ask questions, for with their help the obstructions were quickly removed and the trap-door lifted.

The Chinamen darted down some winding stairs, closely followed by the boys who were led on by the love of strange adventure. Down,—down,—down, they went, through the dimly lighted shaft; while from some dungeon, far below the earth's surface, rose the screams of frantic women. When they had descended about fifty feet the Chinamen unlocked a door, when with wild screams the imprisoned women rushed up the narrow stairway. Wallace and Dick had scarcely time to step back into a depression on one of the balconies, which formed the turns in the staircase, when the tide of half-suffocating humanity swept by them, led by the two men.

As the footsteps died away above them the boys were nearly strangled by the sickening odor of opium which came up from below.

Above, there was a deadly stillness, and a feeling of being quite alone came over each of the boys, who instinctively reached for the other.

"What makes it so still?" whispered Dick, afraid of his own voice in the sudden quiet that had fallen on the place. "Could they have shut us down here,—like the women were? They're a fine lot of Christians. They're all Christians when they want something—the heathen!"

"I don't know what they have done," answered Wallace, getting more nerve as the occasion called for it, as had always been characteristic of his nature. "We may as well find out. I'm not for breathing these opium fumes any longer than I'm forced to. Let's get out.

"What was that?" exclaimed Wallace, catching Dick's arm when they had gone but a few steps.

"I don't know," gasped Dick, still pressing forward and tugging at the restraining hand. "I don't know, and I don't want to stay to find out. Come on, Wallace."

"Not yet. Listen!" He held Dick fast, as he peered into the depths below.

"What is it?" whispered Dick, as the silence was again disturbed by a most uncanny sound.

"It sounds to me like a good old-fashion snore," said Wallace with a restrained laugh. "But this is no joking matter. Someone is asleep down there and they have all run away and don't care. Probably a case of being 'doped' with opium. We've got to go down and investigate."

"You're right. That's what it sounds like," exclaimed Dick, "and we can't leave anyone there to be burned when the fire gets here. But,—can we stand this atmosphere? This opium odor goes against my stomach and I feel queer already."

"We'll have to stand it. The quicker we get down there, and out again, the better. Are you coming?" Wallace was already on his way down and Dick followed quickly. At the bottom of the stairs, they discovered a room about twelve feet square, with tiers of bunks on each side and with no means of ventilation. A lantern burned dimly in the center and the air was so heavy with the fumes of opium that they drew back with fear of being overcome, if they should enter.

"One at a time," said Wallace, as he put out his hand. "You stay here. I'll go in and if



I can't stand it, you can come and get me — if you dare?"

"I'll never leave you in that hole; have no fear of that. But let me go in first. I've got my nerve now."

"No, I led you in here and I'll keep the lead. You stay here in case I need help. You can see me by the light of the lantern. I only wish I knew which bunk to look in first,— so as to save time."

"The sound comes from that side," said Dick, "but I can't tell from which bunk."

"I'll soon find out," said Wallace, tying his handkerchief across his mouth and dashing into the deathly place.

Dick watched from the door while Wallace hurriedly searched the bunks, and then reached into one of them and lifted a stupefied creature in his arms.

"It's a white girl," cried Dick, as Wallace came under the light that fell from the lantern. "And she's not more than eighteen."

"Hold her while I look into the other bunks," said Wallace. "There may be others."

"I'll look. It's my turn now," cried Dick, ignoring the unsteady feeling he had in his head. He rushed in and looked in one bunk after another until they had all been examined,

then he reeled toward the door and fell half suffocated on the threshold.

Wallace threw his limp burden over his big shoulders as he would have the body of a deer in the Wildlands. Seizing Dick by the collar of his coat, he carried the one and dragged the other, flight after flight, until he came out in the room where first they had seen the Chinamen.

On reaching the room that opened into the street and fresh air, Wallace put the young girl gently in a bunk, while he worked to revive Dick, and soon brought him back to consciousness.

"Where am I? What happened?" Dick asked as he gasped and opened his eyes.

"You're here on Earth again, for one thing; and you gave me a nice lug to bring you up, for another," nervously laughed Wallace; to whom the sound of Dick's voice seemed a sufficient reward to off-set all the mental anguish and physical strain he had just passed through.

"Thank God! You're out of that hole all right," he continued thoughtfully. "I don't know what I'd have done if any harm had come to you, when I led you into this scrape. But, we saved some lives;—one, that's cer-

tain. Now the question is, what are we going to do with this girl? We can't leave her here. Thank goodness, those heathen have fled, so they'll not bother us. They'll never come back."

Dick had recovered and was sitting up listening to Wallace. He jumped to his feet as he answered. "We'll have to get her to a hospital. I'll go and see if I can get an ambulance, or find a carriage or wagon I can hire. But I forgot. I have no money."

"Well, I have, so hustle off, while I keep watch."

"But suppose they do come back?" said Dick, with great anxiety.

"Then they'll have to get out mighty quick." Wallace had a look on his face Dick had never seen before, and would not have liked if he had been the cause of it. Now, it gave him a feeling of assurance.

"They may make a fight," suggested Dick.

"Then I'll be ready for them," Wallace remarked, as he threw back his coat and dropped his hand to his belt where the handle of his old "friend of the Wildlands" showed over his trousers. "This was not made to shoot *men*, but a human beast will get it much quicker than a wild child of Mother Nature."

When Dick hurried off, Wallace turned and looked at the unfortunate girl who lay in a heavy sleep. She was dressed in her street clothes, except her hat which had evidently fallen off when she had been laid in the bunk in the underground room. It was evident from her appearance that she had been in a stupor when brought to this place, for there was nothing about her to suggest a struggle. Wallace was glad she was asleep, for he felt embarrassed in the realization that he was for the first time alone with a young girl. He could not understand why he felt so ill at ease lest she should awake before Dick's return; yet, he was very much worried about what he should say to her and how he could explain the situation. He had never talked to a girl and was sure he would stammer like a dunce and make a fool of himself.

Even amid such surroundings, she made a fascinating picture for her hair fell loosely around her face which, although white from the effect of the horrible drug, was still sweet and innocent.

CHAPTER X

Driven on by Fire.

DICK rushed along the street, but had not gone many yards from the door when he saw a young woman hurrying toward him. She was alone and evidently seeking to escape from the burning city by following others who were hurrying through Chinatown.

When they had approached one another to within about one hundred feet, Dick saw a man jump from a dark recess and seize the small bag she carried in her hand. Although the young woman was evidently much frightened and uttered a scream, she kept a tight grasp on the bag and struggled bravely for its possession.

Dick lost no time in reaching her side and he was none too soon, for as he came to her rescue her assailant, possibly seeing that some one was coming to her assistance, drew a knife and raised his hand to strike, but Dick was too quick for the wretch and with a

heavy blow between the eyes, sent him staggering down the street. He recognized this highwayman as one of the two Chinamen they had helped to free the women from that awful underground prison.

He would have rushed after the brute had not the young woman seized his coat.

"Let him go," she cried, as she held him fast. "I'm not hurt and he'll kill you. He undoubtedly has friends near by. You have saved my life and I'll not see you risk your own, even to deal out justice on the villain."

"He'll not kill *me*. I'll pound him within an inch of his life, and then turn him over to the police."

"He has a knife and you're unarmed," she continued. "There are no police about. Everything is in the wildest confusion. Help me to reach the ferry and you will have done much more good."

The last appeal opened Dick's eyes to the danger of leaving this girl,—whom he now observed to be of about his own age,—alone, where hundreds of these celestials were running-a-muck. He thought of the horrible plight of the girl he and Wallace were now trying to save and instantly forgot the Chinaman in the thought of possible aid from this

new acquaintance, who might assist them and at the same time have their protection.

In hurried words he quickly told her all that had occurred and urged her to go back with him to help Wallace, while he went to find some kind of a conveyance to get them to safety.

"I'm a professional nurse," she said, "and may be able to help you. Come, I'll go with you. There is no time to be lost for the fire is coming this way."

As they rushed into the building where Wallace was keeping guard over the girl, they saw a young man standing face to face with Wallace, and heard him exclaim:—

"I'll have her, if I have to kill you to get her." His hand dropped quickly to his hip pocket and pulled out a pistol, but it had hardly appeared in sight when it dropped to the floor from a hand that had been cut open across the back by a bullet from Wallace's "gun."

Dick and his companion had for a moment stood aghast at what they had seen on entering, but were recalled to themselves by the next remark from Wallace, as he stood calmly "covering" the man who writhed with pain

while he looked into the muzzle of Wallace's big pistol.

"You must learn how to handle a gun, before you threaten people," Wallace said, quietly, while his face showed plainly that he was not one to be trifled with. "Kick that pistol over here, and keep your hands up. The next time I fire you can let your hands hang down, because you won't be able to do anything else."

"Wallace," said Dick, springing to his side. "Don't kill him. I know him."

Dick snatched the pistol from the floor and looked in the face of the wounded man.

"Jim Barry," he said, his voice full of horror, "have you fallen so low as to become a murderer?"

"I came here to save that girl," snarled Barry, dropping his head in shame as he recognized the boy who had so many times called him a coward and a bully.

"How'd you know she was here?" asked Dick, with an unpleasant suspicion in his words.

"He said," exclaimed Wallace, "that she had been taken ill while seeing Chinatown and that when the earthquake happened he had gone out to telephone her mother. That he

had come back to take her home. But I didn't believe he was to be trusted, and I told him so. Then he started to pull a gun on me. Well, it didn't take any more than that to convince me I was right in my judgment."

"I'm sorry, Barry. I prophesied that you would come to a bad end. Let him go, Wallace. We must get out of here, for the fire is almost on us."

"Search him first," said Wallace. "He's not to be trusted with any weapons."

Dick quickly went through Barry's pockets and pulled out an ugly looking knife, which he put in his own belt.

"Now, go," said Wallace, "and don't let us see you again. It will be dangerous for you if you do. This is no time for taking chances with one of your type—why you're worse than the Indians, for they have had no chance, while you ought to be a man instead of a brute."

Barry started toward the door.

"Wait," exclaimed Dick's new acquaintance. "I'll bandage your hand, for we can show charity even to a brute like you."

She had opened her bag and already had a bandage over her arm and a bottle of antiseptic in her hand. She was a beautiful young girl

of about the boys' age, and as she took the bleeding hand and carefully dressed the wound, Barry's face turned scarlet with shame and humiliation.

"Won't you try to reform," she said, as she finished her humane work and looked into his shifting eyes. "Can't you begin life over, and try to do some good in the world? You'd be much happier."

"I'll try. I'll try," murmured Barry, with a voice choked with emotion. "Thank you. Thank you so much. You've taught me a great lesson."

"If you really try, you will succeed," urged the nurse. "Why not say *I will*."

"Then — *I will*," cried Barry, and he rushed out into the street to hide the tears that he could no longer keep back, for kindness can break into a hardened heart when all else fails.

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Without a moment's delay the nurse now hurried to the side of the poor girl who was sleeping in the bunk, unconscious of all that had taken place. Directing the boys to stand

by the door, she made a hurried examination of her patient.

"She is all right, but perfectly helpless," she remarked. "Do you think you can get some kind of a carriage?"

"I'll get an ambulance, or a carriage," Dick assured her.

"You can't get an ambulance in time. Get anything. We can't stay here much longer and hope to save our lives. If you don't get something at once, we'll make a stretcher and you boys can carry her. Hurry now, there is no time to lose and don't stay away long."

"Wallace, you stay here on guard," cried Dick, as he shot through the door on his mission. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

The nurse was working over her charge and gave her some kind of a stimulant to try to revive her to some extent.

Wallace stood by the door, lost in admiration for the young nurse who had already proven her ability to render aid in time of need.

He was amazed at her self-command and evident forgetfulness of her own danger from the fast approaching conflagration. He did not know how Dick had found her and brought her to their assistance. He admired her, for she appeared to be as fearless as an old soldier

on the field of battle,—and she was scarcely more than a girl. Whatever ideals Wallace had formed of women up to this time, he now became convinced that they were superior to man in many ways, and he honored and respected womanhood with a sacred devotion.

“Look out and see if the fire is coming this way,” suggested the nurse. “That horrible roar seems to be growing louder.”

Wallace bounded into the street and was back in an instant.

“It is almost here. It is coming down this street but a few blocks away. What shall we do? Dick must know this and ought to come back at once. Shall I fix up some kind of a stretcher?”

“Yes. We may as well be prepared in case he can get nothing better.”

Wallace tore off two long boards from one of the bunks and cut some draperies into strips, which he quickly fastened across from one board to the other. On these he laid whatever he could find to make a litter, beyond which extended the two boards which could be used as carrying handles. When the stretcher was prepared, the nurse and Wallace lifted the sleeping form of the girl from the

bunk and laid her gently on the carrying device.

"Look again and see where the fire is, now," directed the nurse.

"It's coming fast — only a block away," shouted Wallace from the door.

"Can you see anything of your friend?" asked the nurse.

"No, the street is full of smoke and frantic people. I can not see anything."

"Then we must go alone," said the nurse with determination. "You take the front end and I will take the other."

"And leave Dick behind?" questioned Wallace, in great anxiety.

"He will know we have gone on and will follow," said the nurse. "We cannot travel as fast as he can and he will find us before we get to the ferry. We cannot risk this girl's life by waiting longer."

"You're right, but how can Dick ever find us in such a crowd? We must think of some way to let him know where we will meet him. I cannot think of leaving him behind. Perhaps I'd never see him again. What can we do?"

"Here, write him a note," suggested the nurse, diving her hand into her bag and bring-

ing out some letter paper. "Pin it up there on the bunk. He can't miss it, for it will catch his eye at once, when he comes in the door and looks to see if the bunk is empty."

"Where shall we tell him to meet us?" asked Wallace, greatly distracted with the thought of parting from Dick, yet convinced of his duty to get the two girls to some place of safety.

"The Ferry House," answered the nurse. "Quickly now. We must not delay."

Wallace hurriedly scrawled the note in big letters and fastened it to the bunk, then seizing his end of the stretcher,—for the nurse had already taken her place at the other end,—they lifted their burden and hurried through the door.

As they stepped into the street they were almost upset by a push-cart that came rushing down upon them.

"Looked out!" yelled Wallace, for the smoke was now filling the street and with the dark of the night made it impossible to judge distances, even though the fire, now so near them, illuminated the entire city with a horrible glow.

"Wallace! Wallace! is that you?" called a voice from behind the cart as it rushed by.

"Yes, Dick. Turn 'round."

Wallace and the nurse stopped, while Dick turned the push-cart and came to where they were.

"It was all I could get," panted Dick, breathless with running. "We've got to pay this man fifty dollars for the use of it. He'll help us push it, for he won't trust it out of his sight."

"All right," cried Wallace. "Steady now, while we lay the stretcher on it."

He was so glad to have found Dick and to have the use of any kind of a vehicle with which to get the unconscious girl out of danger, that he would have paid any price.

"Wait! We can get our blankets and things," said Wallace, just remembering them. "They may come in handy before we get out of this;—especially the food."

Wallace and Dick dashed back into the building and came out with everything, which they dumped hurriedly into the cart.

"You get up there, too," said Dick to the nurse. "We can push you both, and you can keep the sparks off that poor girl."

"Oh, no. It will be too heavy. I'll run along-side."

"You'll get in," said Dick.

"Come Wallace. We'll put her in," he cried, as she persisted in her refusal.

"Oh, very well. If I must, I must," said the nurse smiling.

The boys gave her a lift and she sprang into the cart which the man was already pushing forward. Then the boys took hold and they ran rapidly along the streets, block after block, until they had turned one way and another trying to get out of the burning section.

They found that it was out of all reason to try to get to the ferry and after a long and hard fight got far enough away to feel safe in resting for a time to determine on some place to go.

It was evident there was but one thing to be done and they decided to go to Golden Gate Park, where they could, at least, rest in safety until they could make some definite plans.

The nurse assured them that all her patient needed would be a chance to sleep until the effect of the drug had passed off, after which she could readily get her into good condition to go on whenever opportunity offered.

CHAPTER XI

Among the Refugees.

IT WAS a weary and smoke-stained group that came into Golden Gate Park, for the boys had not been able to keep the nurse in the push-cart and she had tramped courageously by their side, often helping to push the vehicle up the heavier grades, even against their protests.

"I'd much rather be doing something," she had said, "for it keeps my mind off the terrible suffering that is on every side. I cannot help thinking of the invalids, and the poor mothers with children, and it is all so horrible that I want to keep my mind on what we are doing to save at least one person beside ourselves."

Once in the Park they found thousands of refugees there before them. They were a motley crowd and were collected together in groups making the best arrangements they could for the comfort of the women and children.

It seemed as if each one had seized the thing nearest at hand in the rush from their homes and had held on to it as their one last wordly possession, but none of them had the complete necessities for comfort and protection.

Here was a group whose most valuable possession was a coffee pot and some pans; there a family with blankets; and nearby two sons with a mattress they had brought for their aged mother. Some had extra clothing; others scarcely enough to cover their backs. One old German woman had saved the feather pillows she had received as a wedding present in the old country; while others carefully guarded such treasures as the Family Bible or Photograph Album. Many had small treasure boxes of tin or wood that they were accustomed to keep near them and had not forgotten.

Among the children, some had saved pet dolls which had been snuggled up to them in their sleep and when they had been so suddenly awakened, were carried along in the flight for safety by the "little mothers."

One small boy had saved his base-ball bat, while another had a foot-ball. Each one had some treasure brought from the home, now fallen and smouldering under the great red canopy of smoke that hung over the city.

Here and there men could be seen building camp-fires to prepare food for their dear ones and others were erecting some kind of shelter of such materials as they had been able to secure.

Most of the people seemed to be accepting the situation in a matter-of-fact sort of a way, hardly able to think of more than the immediate necessities and to be thankful for their escape from the conflagration that was sweeping through the city.

There was everywhere apparent a great sense of relief in the knowledge that the fire could not follow them into the Park, and the relaxation from the terrible mental strain of the past hours was manifested by strong reactions.

Wallace and Dick led their party well back into the heart of the Park, and selecting a little knoll for their camp, carefully lifted the stretcher from the cart and placed it under some trees.

"You sit by her and rest," suggested Dick, "while Wallace and I make such arrangements as we can for your comfort."

"We'll soon have a tent here," said Wallace. "One of those hotel blankets will make a cover big enough for you two girls."

The boys quickly unloaded the cart and paid the man, who hurried away to find another chance to make money before the opportunity was gone.

"You better eat some of those graham crackers," suggested Wallace to the nurse. "You must be nearly famished."

"No, I am not hungry, but I think I could sleep for a few minutes, if you are to be right here all the time. My patient is still sleeping as if nothing had been happening. She will never remember anything of what she has passed through."

"You go to sleep and we'll stand guard," said Wallace. "When you awake we will have a nice tent for you."

"Now, Dick, you cut some tent-pegs and I'll find a ridge-pole. You've got a knife, thanks to your old acquaintance, Barry."

"Say, Dick. I really believe that little girl over there, gave him a lesson he'll never forget, and may make a new man of him. What she did and said, and the fact of your finding him in such a degraded state, may make him think and try to be better."

"I hope it will," said Dick, thoughtfully, "but it is a great deal harder to climb back to a good reputation, than it is to keep it when you

have it. Evil gets a grip on a fellow and is not easily shaken off. I pity anyone who has to fight temptation with past experience always telling him it is a useless struggle. It adds ten-fold to the power of the temptation."

"But, don't you remember how he said, '*I will*' as he rushed out of the door?"

"Yes. But promises are more easily made than kept when one has never had any experience in keeping them. Still, let's hope for the best. Worse fellows than Barry have reformed and he is not likely to forget this night as long as he lives. It may be his salvation."

"Well, you get those tent-pegs and we'll put up a decent shelter for the girls. Do you know how to cut them?"

"Yes. I've done considerable camping in my time."

Wallace looked around for a place to put up the tent and when Dick came back with the pegs, he drew him aside and in an undertone explained his plan.

"Can we do it?" questioned Dick, looking at a low straight limb at which Wallace pointed.

"Why it's easy enough," explained Wallace. "We'll drive the pegs first and then when we have the cover all ready we'll throw

it over that branch and quickly tie it down to the pegs."

"But won't we wake the nurse by driving the pegs so near by?"

"Well, if we do we'll tell her to go to sleep again. She's mighty tired and I think she's become so used to noises in what we've gone through, that not even a pistol-shot would wake her during the next few hours."

"Guess you're right about that. Say, Wallace, isn't she a nervy girl? She never showed a sign of giving up until there was nothing more she could do. Then, she dropped asleep in less than two seconds."

"I've learned something about women in the last few hours," Wallace remarked, thoughtfully. "D'you know Dick, I believe I would rather be near that girl than anything I know of. It makes me feel sick when I think that this thing can't last, and that we'll soon have to get her to her people — and perhaps never see her again."

"Come, now, Wallace. Cheer up. You're getting sentimental. You look heartbroken already. She won't forget us. She's not that kind."

"I'm not sentimental. Don't talk such non-

sense. But, Dick, isn't she different from any other girl you ever met?"

"Every girl is different from another," laughed Dick. "This girl is one of the best, but there are other 'best' girls, as you'll find out after more experience. Don't be too quick to fall in love with every nice girl you meet. There's a lot of time yet, and lots of girls, too."

"Who's 'falling-in-love.' Can't I tell you I like that girl better than any other, without being in love?"

"Yes, you can, Wallace, as often as you feel like,—but, don't tell the girl. Wait until you have known her longer. She'll like you better if she doesn't hear such a confession too soon. Girls do not fall-in-love as suddenly as fellows, but when they do it lasts longer.

"Come on Wallace, let's get the tent up. This is no time for love dreams."

"All right. I'm awake after that shaking up. Now, work as quietly as you can. The ground is soft so we won't make much noise. Put one of these pieces of cloth over the tops of the pegs to deaden the sound of the blows."

When the tent was erected and the camp ar-

ranged to the satisfaction of the boys, Dick emptied the crackers from a tin box and went to find some water. On his return they both had a long drink and stretched themselves across the door of the tent, where they slept until the sun streamed into their eyes.

Wallace suddenly awoke and sat up. He had dreamed that he was again in the Wild-lands, but there had been a beautiful girl riding along the trail by his side. When he saw Dick just opening his eyes, and heard a sweet voice calling, "Wallace, Wallace" — the first time he had ever heard his name pronounced by a woman — he realized where he was and jumped to his feet.

"Yes. I'm here Nurse. Do you want me?"

"Oh, did I call you," said the nurse. "I must have been dreaming."

Wallace turned his face away so Dick should not see the color that rose to his cheeks at this last remark.

"How did we get inside the tent?" exclaimed the nurse, in surprise.

"We built it over you, while you were both sleeping, so you could rest as long as you wanted to."

"How thoughtful of you. I must have been

very sound asleep. Why, it's broad daylight. I must have slept hours."

"We've all been asleep," chimed in Dick, who was now sitting up at the entrance to the tent where the boys had slept.

"I guess we were all in need of a rest. Well, for one, I feel better," he continued, as he got up and shook the kinks out of his muscles, which were somewhat cramped after sleeping on the hard ground.

"Where am I? Oh! where am I?" cried a plaintive voice from the tent. "Won't somebody give me a drink of water? I am choking with thirst. What has happened? I can't seem to remember. Where *am* I?"

"Can you get some water?" asked the nurse of the boys, as she put her arms about the girl.

The boys brought the water quickly and left the nurse alone with her charge. After she had taken a long draught from the tin cracker can — for there were no cups or glasses in the camp — she seized the hands of the nurse in a vise-like grip.

"Where is that man who was in the drug store talking to the clerk?" she cried.

"He's gone. You will not see him again.

You need not fear him now. You are with friends who will protect you."

"What was that he put in my soda-water? He asked me if I would not like to try a new kind of flavoring that he was introducing to the trade to mix with other syrups. Something made me feel terribly ill, and then he called a carriage to send me home. That is all I can remember. I have had such horrible dreams,— Oh! such frightful dreams,—and I don't remember how I came here."

"There, there. Don't tremble so. It's all over now. Try to go to sleep again, and after a little more rest you will feel all right."

"No—no. I must find my mother. Where is Mother?"

With one bound the girl jumped from the litter and out of the tent, followed by the nurse, who caught her as she stopped outside looking in wonder at the thousands of refugees about her.

"Am I still dreaming," she cried, clutching at her hair and then wringing her hands.

"No. This is Golden Gate Park. The city is burning. These are people who have fled from the fire. Can't you understand? We brought you here and you are safe,—only you must be calm."

The nurse motioned to the boys to come nearer. "These are our two friends who helped us escape. They will take good care of us. Now come back into the tent and rest a little longer. I'll ask the boys to try to find your mother, for she must be near by in the crowd. She would never have left the city without finding you and this would be the natural place for her to come.

"Tell me your mother's name and the boys will look for her."

"Mrs. Fulton. Mrs. T. K. Fulton," replied the girl, in a dreamy way as she stared at the burning city.

"And what is your name?" asked the nurse.

"Alice,—Alice Fulton," said the girl mechanically.

"Come Alice," urged the nurse. "Come back into the tent, while the boys look for your mother."

"Is the city all destroyed," asked Alice in a dazed way, as she entered the tent.

"The larger part of it," replied the nurse, as the girl collapsed and fell once more into a sound sleep.

The nurse stepped to the door of the tent and signalled to the boys who were anxiously waiting outside, congratulating themselves

that the nurse was with them to care for the girl.

"Go among the people near here and ask them to pass along the inquiry for Mrs. T. K. Fulton. Tell them to say her daughter is at this place. News goes around fast at such times and it may reach the girl's mother."

"Will she come out of this all right?" asked Dick. "She seemed almost crazy."

"Oh, yes. It is the effect of the drug. It has not all passed off yet. When she wakes up again she will be all right. I will partly waken her in a little while and give her some medicine I have, which will steady her nerves and put her in good shape. The worst is over now, and I'm glad of it."

The boys went among the refugees and started the inquiry for Mrs. Fulton. Like an endless chain it was passed along from one to another until thousands had repeated it.

In the meantime, Wallace and Dick had had a long talk with the nurse and heard what Alice Fulton had told of Barry's having drugged her.

"It would have been a good thing if that bullet had killed him," said Wallace, "but I'm glad it did not, for I don't want any man's blood on my hands."

"If he does not reform, he will pay the price of his sins, someday," said the nurse, "and it is not our duty to meet out justice."

"It does not seem possible that any man could become such a fiend. I cannot comprehend it," remarked Wallace, thoughtfully. I can now understand much my father told me, which at the time meant little, or nothing to me."

The boys set to work to provide some food for the camp and by negotiating exchanges with the neighbors they got together a substantial meal. Many of the men had gone out from the Park to secure provisions, and as Wallace was an expert cook at a camp-fire, he rendered valuable aid in preparing the food for a number of the neighbors.

In the afternoon, while the boys and the nurse were discussing the chances of getting across to Oakland, a woman rushed up to their camp asking for Alice Fulton.

"I'm Mrs. Fulton," she said, excitedly. "Is my daughter here? I heard she was at a camp on this knoll."

"Yes, she is here and is safe," said the nurse. "But she is asleep in the tent."

The mother started to rush to the side of

the sleeping girl, but the nurse stopped her and drew her aside.

"Wait! She must sleep. I'm a professional nurse and am caring for her."

"Have they harmed her?" cried the mother. "We got a 'Black-hand' letter late last night, saying she had been kidnapped but would come to no harm if we left three thousand dollars, before daylight, under a stone at the foot of a certain tree in the Park. When Alice did not return from the druggist's, I was nearly crazy. Then came the letter,—and then the earthquake."

"She has been in great danger, but escaped unharmed. You can go in and sit by her if you wish. She will not sleep much longer."

When the mother was left by the side of the sleeping daughter, the nurse came over to the boys and told them what she had learned from the mother, and warned them to say nothing to anyone of where they had found the girl.

"Dick!" exclaimed Wallace, in great excitement. "Remember those men in the doorway? This was the girl they were talking about kidnapping. I wasn't so green after all. If we'd only known a little more, we could have nabbed them and blocked their outrageous plot."

"I believe you're right, Wallace. At the time it seemed ridiculous to think two Black-hand villains would talk in a public place about such a desperate deed."

"Well, it's a lucky chance that took us through Chinatown. Strange things happen in this big world. I guess I'll get my eyes open pretty soon, if experiences keep coming as fast as they have the last twenty-four hours. Why it seems years since I said good-bye to Dandy and Fred; yet, one week ago today, Father and I were living contentedly in our little ranch in the peaceful Wildlands. I begin to think I'll go back there some day,—at least, for a while."

"I wish I could go with you, Wallace," said Dick, thoughtfully, respecting the memories that were evidently flashing through the mind of his friend.

"Would you really like to go, Dick?" asked Wallace, as he blew his nose unusually hard and passed his handkerchief across his face.

"I wonder would you love the mountains and valleys as I do," he continued dreamily. "Would the brooks whisper to you as they do to me? Would the song-birds tell you of their joys and their troubles? Would you understand the languages of the bees and wasps?"

Could you find companionship with the children of Mother Nature, and be happy; as I was?"

"I have always loved Nature," said Dick, "and most of my best ambitions have come from lessons I have learned from her. I am sure I could enjoy the greater wonders which she has hidden away in the deep forests and big mountains. I hope we may go there, someday, together, when I can study these mysteries with your help."

"We'll do it, Dick. We'll do it, as sure as I live,—but let's not talk any more about it now, or I'll get homesick, for a fellow can never forget his love for the scenes of his boyhood."

When Alice Fulton opened her eyes and saw her mother sitting beside her, her joy was sufficiently great to make her forget the pain that still lingered about her eyes and darted through her temples. After a few moments of motherly comfort, during which she was held close to a heart overflowing with gratitude, Alice sat up while her mother arranged her

dishevelled hair and made her appear more presentable.

"Now, we must thank these young men and the kind nurse who saved your life, and hurry back to my friends, for they will be very anxious on account of my long absence."

The boys were surprised to see what a nice looking girl Alice was when the high color was again in her face and her hair had been neatly gathered back from a well formed forehead.

Now, that the delirium had passed, her manner was quiet and her voice sweet and musical. They were sorry that the time had come to part, but were glad that their work of rescue had ended so happily for all.

Names were exchanged by all, and, as Mrs. Fulton said she expected to get to Oakland as soon as possible, they all expressed the hope that they might meet again before long, while Alice promised to call on Margaret Armstrong; which proved to be the name of the nurse.

When the mother and daughter had disappeared down the road, waving a last farewell as they turned the corner, the nurse remarked to Dick:

"You said your name was Richard Clarkson. May I ask where your home is?"

"I haven't any, now. I used to live just

outside of New York, before my mother died."

"What was your grandfather's name?" she questioned. "Your mother's father?"

"Hiram Baldwin," Dick replied, as he looked at her and in turn asked:

"Why do you ask me that question?"

"Because that was the name of my grandfather who lived in New England. My mother's younger sister married a man named Clarkson and they had a son Richard. Was your mother's name Ella?"

"Yes. Ella Baldwin Clarkson."

"You are my cousin Richard Clarkson," she cried, as she rushed close to Dick and seized him by his arms while she looked into his eyes which were full of astonishment.

"Then you are my Cousin Margaret. I never expected to find any of my relatives," said Dick, his voice choked with emotion,— "for I did not know the name of the man my aunt married, nor even my aunt's Christian name. But," he continued, "where is my aunt?—and my uncle?"

"They are in Portland, Oregon, on a visit. Our home is in Oakland. I was on a visit to a friend in the city. We got separated in the crowd after the earthquake, and I was trying to reach the ferry to get home, when you

saved me from that brute. How strange a circumstance."

"It must be Fate," exclaimed Dick. "I'm almost glad there was an earthquake, for before that I was alone in the world, except for dear old Wallace here, who has proven himself a true friend."

"Did you say your home was in Oakland?" asked Wallace, with great interest.

"Yes. Why?"

"Do you know a man by the name of Franklyn Baxter?"

"Why,—very well indeed. He is our next door neighbor and Father's greatest friend."

"He's my guardian," said Wallace. "That is,—he really is, but he doesn't know it, yet, because I did not succeed in finding him yesterday at his office, and intended to call on him today, to tell him of my father's death. I only reached San Francisco yesterday."

"Why, I know who you are. I am surprised I did not recognize you at once. I thought your face was familiar,—even black as it was with smoke,—but could not place you in my memory. No wonder, for I should never have expected to meet you in such a place, although I have known you by sight for years and knew I would meet you some day."

"You've known me by sight for years?" exclaimed Wallace, in surprise.

"Yes. Mr. Baxter has told us all about you and your strange life, and shown us your pictures as he received them year after year. Your name might have given me a clue had we been less worried about our safety, for we always speak of you as 'Wallace,' at our house. Now I suppose I must change and put a 'Mr.' in front of your name."

"No — no. Don't do that. Just call me Wallace. I would rather be called Wallace, it seems so much nicer."

"There's Fate again," said Dick, who had observed the color rise in Wallace's cheeks, as this pretty girl told him she had used his name so intimately long before he knew of her existence.

"I don't know where this thing is going to end, Cousin Margaret, but it strikes me we better break camp and see if we can't get over to Oakland before another night comes on."

"Yes. We must," said his cousin. "Let's start at once."

"Shall we take the blankets, or give the tent to our neighbors?" asked Dick.

"Give them to these people," said Margaret. "You'll not need them again. There will be

plenty of room for you in our home, and Wallace will find he will be received like an own son at Mr. Baxter's.

"But, how'll we get to Oakland?" she asked, anxiously.

"We'll manage some way," said Wallace, and ran off to offer the camp to the others who were not yet leaving the Park.

CHAPTER XII

Beyond the Reach of the Fire.

THE journey to the ferry proved to be a much more difficult undertaking than the boys had anticipated. The general confusion and the destruction which had taken place, made the progress very slow compared with what it would have been under different conditions; still, they went on, determined to reach Oakland if possible, even if it should not be until late at night.

Margaret was as game as a thorough-bred and urged them not to worry about her. She cheered them with bright sayings and her merry laughter, which could never be suppressed by any troubles of her own and only succumbed to the anxiety she felt for others who were suffering or in affliction. Her happy nature was one of her greatest gifts in nursing the sick — a profession she had obtained her parents' consent to study, only, when they saw that her happiness depended upon fulfilling

what she believed to be a call to duty. They hoped she would soon become satisfied to give it up after some actual experience with its hardships, but, young as she was, she seemed to know her own mind and never seemed as happy as when bringing comfort and relief to the poor and suffering. She insisted on taking no cases except among the poor and would not accept pay for her services. In many-a home where the darkness of disease had been dispelled by her aid she was known as "Little Miss Sunshine."

With such a companion to encourage them, it is not strange that the boys finally reached the great throng that crowded around the Oakland Ferry House. Here they came to an enforced halt, and only after long and tedious waiting did they get near the front of the crowd.

Their plight now seemed to grow even worse than before. The people were jammed so closely together as to make it almost unbearable and there was little or no movement forward, while retreat was impossible. Suddenly a space by the doors of the ferry-house was cleared because of some accident, and when the crowd was forced back into the street the boys and their companion found themselves in the

front row of one of the side lines, near the doors.

The place was policed by "Jackies" from a man-of-war and Dick at once recognized his old friends from the ship that had brought him to 'Frisco and at once told his companions.

"If I can only attract their attention, when this excitement lets up, they may help us. Hold your positions in the front here, no matter what happens."

A pair of watchful eyes in the crowd, that were keener than those of the sailors, saw Dick, and their owner pounced upon him as if to devour him.

"Patsy!" cried Dick, as his faithful friend jumped full upon his breast and was gathered up in a strong embrace.

The crowd looked on, touched at the sight of the dog's delight as he repeatedly kissed his young master's face and wriggled and barked to show his joy.

This commotion at one point in the crowd, and the sudden disappearance of the faithful and well-trained Patsy from the heels of the Boatswain,— who had adopted him after Dick's departure,— brought two of the "Jackies" face to face with Dick immediately, and a few words of explanation secured an escort for

Dick and his friends across the open space and onto the ferry.

As Patsy refused to leave his old friend, the Boatswain insisted that Dick must take him and keep him.

"He don't eat nothin' on the ship, and tries to jump aboard every boat that goes ashore. He's been pinin' away for a sight of you. He's all yours, so you've got to take him along with you."

"Come out and see us before we sail," called the other Jackies, as the ferry drew out from the "slip," and Dick shouted back his promise to do so.

Once on the Oakland side, they hurried on under the direction of Margaret. As they turned a corner, she exclaimed:—"There's our house and there's Mr. Baxter's—next door. Wait a minute till I tell the servants that I am all right. Then we'll all go in to see your guardian.

The minute extended itself somewhat, for all the servants had to hug and kiss, and cry over, their little mistress, whom they had given up for dead, but as soon as she could escape she ran down the steps and up those of the Baxter home, calling to the boys to follow.

Mr. Franklyn Baxter was sitting in his

library holding a telegram from Margaret's father, urging him to get some news of her at the first possible moment.

He recognized the foot-steps and the voice outside and hurried to throw open the door. She was quickly gathered up in his arms and hugged, as Patsy had been by Dick,—for at such times people care little about who sees the manifestation of their emotions.

Margaret had been like an own child to the Baxters, who had no children of their own. She had always been their "Little Margerie," and he, her "Uncle Frank."

"Oh, Uncle Frank," she cried at the first opportunity. "Whom do you think I've found? Your Wallace, from the Wildlands, and my own cousin Richard Clarkson. Did you ever hear such good fortune out of bad. This is Wallace, and this is Dick," and she pulled the boys into the house, as a happy child might drag out her dolls for inspection.

"Oh," she continued, "and this is Patsy, Dick's dog, who got us to the ferry."

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Baxter, "things are coming so fast I don't know that I take them all in. Come into the library and stand in line. "I'll try, to see if I can pick you out from this whirlwind description."

Mr. Baxter was one of the men who is best described as "The Salt of the Earth;" kind and generous to a fault and with a heart big enough for a whole township. Having no children and being a man of large wealth he lived for others, while the people loved him as few wealthy men are loved in these days.

As they grouped themselves inside the big library doors, he stepped over to Wallace, carefully scrutinizing his face.

"Yes," he said. "You are the son of my dear, old friend. I fear you come here because of a serious loss."

"Yes, sir. My father was killed by Indians, who burned our ranch while I was off on the trail to mail that last letter to you."

"I am very, very sorry to hear such terrible news," said the lawyer, but we will not try to talk of it now. It would be most trying to us both at this moment of excitement over Margaret's return and all that is transpiring. I want you to understand, however, that with your father's death, I not only become your legal guardian, but you are to become my adopted son, if you care to do so after knowing me better. In the meantime, this is your home."

"Thank you, Mr. Baxter," said Wallace,

about overcome by the kindness and affection with which he was received by his father's old friend.

"Not 'Mr. Baxter,' Wallace. Call me 'Uncle Frank.' For years you have been known as 'Wallace,' in this home and both my wife and I have been waiting for the day when you were to come to us, to fill the place of our own boy who died many years ago."

At that moment Mrs. Baxter entered and threw her arms around Margaret, who was glad of an excuse to shed a few tears of joy, as the scene between Mr. Baxter and Wallace had greatly impressed her. Mrs. Baxter was as beautiful a character as her husband and had made much of their neighbor's little girl from the time she came to live next door.

"My dear," said Mr. Baxter, leading Wallace forward. "Do you know this young man? Look at him carefully."

With a quick look and a woman's intuition, she exclaimed:—

"Wallace, *our* Wallace! How happy we are to welcome you."

There were tears in her eyes, and more,—a mother's love for the boy who could not recall his own mother, and who now, for the first time, felt a woman's hands fall affectionately

upon his big shoulders as she told him how she had looked forward to the day when he should come to live with them.

Mr. Baxter turned and spoke to Dick. He gave him a cordial welcome, which was echoed by his wife. A telegram was rushed off to Margaret's parents in Portland, urging them to remain to finish their visit as their daughter was safe and well. Then the happy party went to the dining-room to enjoy a hearty meal and later sat down for a long evening of explanations.

During the week that followed Mr. Baxter was at home much of the time, for he was conducting his business in his library since he no longer had a 'Frisco office. He had learned the full history of both the boys, who already had become comfortably established on the third floor.

"Boys," he said one day, as they came into his library at his request, "I have a plan for your future, and I would like to know what you think of it. Will you sit down and hear it?"

"In my law business," he began, "I have to assume the care of a great deal of real estate

and now that so much rebuilding will be necessary, it is going to make a great deal of confusion in my law office and will necessitate much outside work. I have been thinking that it would be well to start a separate real estate business in an office by itself, and put you two boys in charge,—Wallace as the head and you, Dick, as his assistant. I should give you a force of clerks from my office who have full knowledge and experience of the details, but I would expect you boys to jump in and learn to carry the responsibilities of the business and to relieve me of much care. I must have some one I can trust implicitly. That is more than experience at the outset. Experience can be acquired. Integrity cannot, for it grows up with the child."

The boys were of course delighted with the plan and so all was settled according to Mr. Baxter's suggestions.

"There is another thing I want to mention," said Mr. Baxter. "You, Dick, will meet your aunt and uncle tomorrow, on their return. They will want you to come to live with them. You refer them to me. Tell them I told you to do so. They can only have you a part of the time. Your room, and your place at our table, is to be always ready for you. You must

be with us at least half the time, for I don't want Wallace to be without the companionship of some one of his own age. He has lost too much of that during his life and, now that you have become such good friends, I want you to be together all you can. So you tell them to settle that with me."

"I'll be very glad to do so," said Dick, showing his appreciation in his face. "I cannot thank you enough for all your kindness. I only hope I may be able to repay it, to some extent, by my devotion to your wishes in the new business. I'll certainly try my best."

"Now, Wallace," continued Uncle Frank. "There is only one thing necessary to complete our happiness. That's Dandy."

"Write at once to your friend, Fred Brown, and tell him to ship Dandy on by train. I have a big box stall in the stable that I am keeping for him."

"Oh, Uncle Frank! That fills my cup to overflowing," said Wallace. "You don't know how much that means to me."

"Well,—will you write today? I want to see that horse."

"I'll write this minute."

"Look out of the window, Wallace," said Mr. Baxter. "I hear some one asking for me."

It's some client, I suppose, who is not sure of the address."

Wallace went to the window. He gave a cry, as he darted back and out of the front door.

"It's Dandy and Fred Brown," was all they heard, and they followed him into the street.

With a series of jumps, Wallace had reached the lower step, but Dandy had not waited in the street, but was up on the sidewalk to meet him.

With his arms around the horse's neck, Wallace was trying to say all he wanted to, to Fred Brown and Dandy at the same time.

Dandy had seized him by the shoulder of his coat,—to make sure he should never again escape from him,—when Uncle Frank and Dick reached the steps.

"Why it's the Fred Brown I know," said Dick, as he rushed down the stoop.

"Hello Fred," he shouted. "How did you get to Oakland? I knew you went West, but I never expected we'd meet out here.

"How strange," he remarked turning to Wallace, "that your Fred Brown and mine, should be the same. It never suggested itself to me when you spoke of him."

While Dick had been unloading his mind of

these thoughts, Fred had jumped off Dandy's back and was holding Wallace by one hand, which had been taken from Dandy's neck, while he threw the other arm across Dick's shoulders.

Wallace introduced Fred to Mr. Baxter, and as all the boys tried to talk at once, Uncle Frank suggested that they go around to the stable and see Dandy safely in his stall, after which they could come into the house and talk to their heart's content.

As they walked to the stable, Fred explained that he had been called to Oakland to "help out," in the extra work occasioned by the catastrophe, which had overloaded the offices with business. He had brought Dandy on, because he could not leave him behind.

"Will you remain here permanently?" asked Wallace.

"Yes, that's the understanding."

"And will your brother, Will, and your mother, come here?" asked Dick.

"Yes, as soon as I'm settled."

"Then," said Dick, "the Fates have worked wonders, for us all, out of a most terrible calamity."

"Wallace," said Fred, drawing him aside as they walked toward the house, "Captain

Fuller found that band of Indians and there was a terrible fight. When the battle was over, most of the ' Bucks ' were dead and the soldiers took back the rest, with the ' Squaws,' and put them on the reservation."

" I am glad my father's death has been avenged," said Wallace thoughtfully, " but I wish he had come out of the Wildlands before it was too late."

A little later, Wallace took Margaret out to the stable and presented his dear, old friend, Dandy, to his first girl-friend. They did not seem to be at all jealous of one another, but formed a strong mutual friendship at once."

" By the way," exclaimed Margaret, as they walked toward the house, " I met Alice, today, and she is going to call tomorrow. She's very anxious to see Dick,— and you, again."

That night, Wallace dreamed that Margaret was the only person, except himself, by whom Dandy would consent to be ridden;— and when he awoke he wondered if his dream might not be an omen of happy days to come.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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